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GIANNETTO.

CHAPTER I.

It was one very lovely evening in the early autumn that I first became acquainted with the little village of San Jacopo.

I was staying at Nice with my two daughters; the youngest of whom had been ordered abroad for her health; and occasionally, when wearied by the monotonous routine of our life, I used to amuse myself by making excursions of some days' length in the neighbourhood.

These journeys often brought me upon beautiful and secluded villages, unknown to the ordinary traveller, and passed by as merely far-off features of the surrounding landscape; but seldom have I beheld a more picturesque scene than that presented to me by my first sight of San Jacopo.

The village lies in a bay, huge rocks closing it in on every side except on the south, where the sea ripples to its feet, intensely, wondrously blue, as only the Mediterranean can be. The sole access to it is by steep paths, cut in zigzag lines down the cliffs, in some places

so steep that they become rugged steps, only to be trodden by man and the sure-footed mule. The main road of the Riviera runs some miles inland, and the fisher population live on from year to year undisturbed by visitors.

The sun had just gone down, and the after-glow of the warm south tinged every object with its golden light. The sea lay calm and still as a lake, scarcely ruffling itself into little glistening wreaths of foam, as it played with the base of the rocks. Myrtle and arbutus, and masses of emerald vegetation, grew down to the very water's edge.

It was growing late, but I could not resist the temptation of going down into the village; and I was well rewarded. Through quaint, narrow streets, overhung by the wide projecting roofs of the houses, I walked till a sudden turn brought me into the piazza of the village. It was large for so small a place. On one side the little church, with its tall slender belfry, and in the midst a large fountain—the clear

water dripping over the side out of the broken lips of four quaint old lions.

Two or three steps led up to this fountain, and on and about these a group of peasants was assembled ; some sat, some leant over the edge ; all were talking and gesticulating, and a look of gaiety animated the whole scene. It was, I remembered, *a festu*.

In one corner of the piazza sat an old woman selling medallions, images, rosaries, &c. ; and now and then her shrill voice echoed through the crowd, "Buy, buy, Signori ; for the love of heaven !"

Suddenly a side-door of the church, probably that of the sacristy, opened, and a loud, deep voice called out, "Où, Carola, come here !" A tidy-looking woman left her doorway and hurried across to the church—she appeared to say something which I could not hear ; then the former voice exclaimed, "Certainly, certainly." The door was thrown open, and the village priest came forth and advanced towards me.

The *Curato* of San Jacopo was a tall angular man, with a mild and kindly expression of face. In any other than an Italian the large limbs and gaunt frame would have been awkward ; but there was a certain grace in his movements, and even in the way in which the scanty and rather rusty cassock hung closely around him. The courtesy with which he removed the three-cornered hat from his tonsured head, and bowed low, would have rivalled the courtly welcome of the highest-born gentleman.

"Welcome, welcome, Signore !" he said, extending a long sinewy hand, with supple fingers ; "without doubt you have heard of our picture, and would like to see it ? Alas ! it is becoming dark, and the morning light is best. But what

matter ? one cannot always choose !" and beckoning me to follow, he led the way towards the principal door of the church.

The peasants stood aside as we passed, looking after me with smiling, good-humoured faces. One among them especially attracted my attention—a tall youth, standing on the steps of the fountain, and leaning over the side. He was dressed in a fashion rather superior to that of his companions, and looked somewhat above them in intelligence, if not in rank. Though all those who stood round him were chattering and laughing gaily, he neither moved nor spoke, but stood motionless as a statue, with his eyes fixed on the water.

"Would you tell me, Signore," I asked, "is that tall young fellow one of the village fishermen, like the others ?"

"Who ? where ? Ah ! it is Nencini you speak of. Yes, he is a fisherman ; poor lad, he is sadly afflicted—dumb from his birth ! Yonder is his mother, Carola—excellent woman ! she is my house-keeper, and I have been able to give him something of an education ; but he is a fisherman, without doubt. We are all fishermen here."

"Dumb from his birth"—poor fellow ! I looked back at him as we entered the church, the priest courteously holding back the heavy leathern curtain to let me pass. I was struck by the expression of the lad's face—it could not be called bad ; but there was a dark look of bitterness on it which sadly marred its beauty. I need hardly say that I had never before heard of the picture I was supposed to have come to see ; but I did not betray my ignorance, for it would have deeply mortified the excellent priest.

The church was very small, but elaborately decorated. The side-altar of its patron saint, San Jacopo,

was, above all, honoured—the altar, apse, and wall being quite covered with votive offerings,—little pictures of wrecks and storms, of miraculous draughts of fish, of broken boats, &c., with silver hearts of every size and weight, and, in front, a whole row of lamps burning, each in its little red glass.

Over the altar hung the famous picture, covered by a faded green curtain. After lighting two of the tall candles before it, the good priest drew aside the curtain, and allowed me to behold the treasure of San Jacopo.

It was a curious, very old specimen of Byzantine art—the Madonna and Child, almost black with age, and made more so by the huge flat crowns of beaten silver on the brows of the sacred figures. Something there was about it dignified and grand, as there often is even in the inferior specimens of that school.

The *Curato* was just beginning his explanations when a sound from without arrested his attention; shouts of laughter, and a curious sort of noise like the inarticulate roar of some enraged animal—then a shrill woman's voice, talking loudly.

"Allow me, allow me, Signore! a little moment," he exclaimed, hurriedly quitting the church. Presently I heard his voice loudly remonstrating, and the sounds ceased. For some time he did not return, and I sat down on a bench in front of the sacred picture. After about ten minutes I got tired of waiting, and went to the door, intending to go out; when, rather to my consternation, I found that it was locked. I could not help smiling, for it was very evident that the priest was so afraid of my escaping without hearing his story, that he had locked me in. There was nothing for it but patience, and I philosophically resigned myself to my fate.

The after-glow faded away; the short southern twilight was over, and the little church grew darker and darker.

After an absence of about three-quarters of an hour, the priest returned through the sacristy, followed by Gian-Battista Nencini, the dumb lad.

Gian-Battista—or Giannetto, as he was usually called—seated himself in a corner of the church, sullenly twisting his broad-brimmed hat between his knees; while, as if unconscious that a moment had elapsed since he left me, the good priest continued his discourse just where he had left off.

"Behold, Signore, what grace! what benevolence! how natural the attitude! The picture has not always been here. Heaven knows that San Jacopo might have been a great and flourishing town by this time had it always been with us. No, no! in the fourteenth century it was carried off by a certain Ceccolo degli Orsini, one of the Roman princes, they say, a great *condottiere* by sea and land. He carried it as a banner for years; but, by the intervention of the saints, it was preserved from spears and swords, and it won for him the battle of Turrita, in the Valdichiana, when he was in the service of the republic of Siena. Some eighty years ago it was sold in Rome (by whom, it is not known), but it was bought for a French convent, and sent off by sea from Cività Vecchia. By the miraculous ordinance of heaven the ship went down, and the picture was washed ashore. It was found on the beach by the fishermen, and brought back once more into the church. Alas! some of the drapery was damaged, but it has been well restored by a young artist who passed through the town; and behold, the principal parts, the two faces, are intact. Since it has been

here, many are the good deeds it has done. Look at this picture"—pointing to one of the votive offerings—"see the raging sea, the sinking boat, the man swimming for his life! That man was Pietro Nencini, father of Giannetto yonder. At the moment he was sinking he called on the Santa Madonna of San Jacopo, and just as he called, he felt dry land! He lived to die in his bed, and leave his widow to be my housekeeper. Ah! it was a wonderful preservation! Many a time has poor Carola entreated the intervention of Madonna and San Jacopo to restore speech to her son; but—what wilt thou?—'tis the will of Heaven."

The priest paused to take breath, and I asked him what had been the cause of his leaving me so abruptly. He bent down, and spoke low, that Giannetto should not hear.

"It was those lads," he said. "In their idle hours they are always laughing and mocking Giannetto; and when I am not there, they drive him half mad. Heaven help me! at such times he is a wild beast, and even I can scarcely calm him. Cruel! cruel! Why cannot they leave the poor boy alone?"

The priest turned angrily round, looking at Giannetto. He continued, with a sigh, "Sometimes I have thought that some doctor might cure him. I have heard that such things are not impossible; but I have not the means of paying one, and his mother still less."

Poor Giannetto sat still in the dark corner of the church, leaning back against the wall. The sullenness had faded out of his face now, leaving on it a look of depression which went to my heart. I felt the most profound pity for one so young, writhing under so grievous a burden, evidently chafing and rebelling against it, unable to resign himself, and growing more and more

embittered by his isolation. But for that look of bitterness he would have been very handsome. Slightly made and tall, his figure was muscular and active; and I learnt afterwards that he was one of the most skilful and successful fishermen on the coast.

The priest remained silent for a moment or so, and then, with a short sigh, he turned away, and began replacing the curtain over the sacred picture, saying, as he did so, "Vossignoria should visit us on our great day, the feast of San Jacopo. Ah! then he would see great things; for the pilgrims come from far and wide, and the flowers and garlands are many. Behold, that large silver heart was given by a lady from near Mentone—a great and rich lady. Her husband had been at sea, and she awaited his return; but for three weeks after his vessel was due at Marseilles it did not arrive, and Signora Francesca vowed a silver heart to every church dedicated to San Jacopo (his patron saint) within fifty miles, if he should return safely. At the end of forty days the ship came in; but the husband had lost one leg, so she naturally reduced the number of miles to twenty, and our church was happily within the distance."

The priest would have run on for ever in this strain; but the gathering clouds warned me that I must not linger if I hoped to regain the little town where I had slept the previous night before total darkness.

I took out what money I had with me, and offered it to the priest for his poor. He took it in his hand, jingling it for a moment, and then, in a half-hesitating way, he said, "A thousand pardons, Signore; but if Vossignoria did not object, I have a little fund in hand which I am trying to raise to send Giannetto to a great doctor at Nice; and we

have not any really in need at this moment. San Jacopo be praised! the fish came asking to be caught this year. So if you do not object, might I?"

I was about to give a ready assent, when a sudden idea struck me, and I said, "Why should not Giannetto return with me to Nice, see the doctor, and hear whether anything can be done for him?" The priest caught at the offer with great eagerness, and I could see how much his good heart was set on the poor lad's cure.

While I was speaking, I had forgotten that we had moved towards the door of the church, close to the corner in which Giannetto sat, when suddenly I felt my hands seized and kissed with all the fervour of Italian gratitude; and looking round, I saw a pair of large dark eyes fixed upon me, changed in expression, mute and imploring, shining with the light of a new

hope, so intense and eager that they haunted me long after. Alas! at that moment it flashed across me what a cruel disappointment I might be preparing for these poor, simple folk. Could dumbness such as this be cured? I felt a strong conviction that it could not; and I was almost angry with myself for having suggested the idea. "But remember," I said, "do not hope too much. The most learned and cleverest of doctors can do no good if it be not the will of God."

The priest answered me very gravely, "True, true, Signora. And if this fail, Giannetto will know that it is God's will, and we will pray for patience for him."

Before an hour was over, Giannetto had taken leave of his mother, we had mounted the hill, and were on our road towards Nice—a large lamp-like moon turning the gentle sea into a sheet of silver.

CHAPTER II.

Nothing could be more attentive than Giannetto's manners to me during our three days' walk back to Nice. He seemed to think constantly of my comfort, sheltering me from the sun, insisting upon carrying my knapsack, and evidently most anxious to show that he was devoted to my service. We carried on a sort of conversation, he answering my questions either by signs or by writing on a slate; for, unlike most of his equals, he could both read and write well. I learnt in this way something of his former history.

Pietro, his father, died when he was a child but two years old, leaving him and his mother Carola dependent on the charity of the village. The good priest made her his housekeeper, paying her a very

moderate sum weekly for services which hitherto had been done for him voluntarily by the village women. Perhaps his little allowance of meat was curtailed in consequence, and it certainly was all that Carola could do to make the threadbare cassock hold out as long as possible while this weekly payment lasted; but, when Giannetto was still a very young boy, he began to earn something for himself; and at the age of sixteen he bought a share in a fishing-boat, and was able henceforth to support his mother by his own exertions.

Giannetto's partner in the ownership of the boat was a certain Pietro Zei, a man about ten years older than himself, and of him he spoke (or, I should rather say, wrote) with a hatred that almost

amounted to ferocity. Pietro was a clever fisherman, and was looked upon by his younger companions as a leader and wit among them. Unfortunately, all his tastes were those of a tyrant; he would laugh and torment Giannetto unceasingly, imitating the inarticulate sounds the poor fellow made, jeering and taunting him, till he worked him up into fury. The village lads were only too ready to follow his lead, and the consequence was, that Giannetto's temper, never very gentle, became more gloomy and morose every day, too often varied by fits of unbridled passion. In vain for many years had the priest striven to repress this spirit of cruel railery; although controlled in his presence, it broke out universally when he was not near. It is fair to say that I believe that Pietro and his fellow-tormentors little realised the pain they inflicted. They were cruel, partly from thoughtlessness, and a good deal from utter inability to understand the acute sensitiveness of the dumb boy, who, proud and disposed to be vindictive by nature, suffered from the humiliation of his infirmity to an unusual degree.

At the age of nineteen, three years before I first came across him, Giannetto had saved money enough to buy a boat, and release himself from his partnership with Pietro. He succeeded well in his trade, and his mother and the *Curato* had great hopes that he would settle down resigned to his fate, and live, if not in content, at least in submission to the decree of heaven; but, to their sorrow, it proved far otherwise. The good priest would often hold long conversations with him, telling him of the duty of resignation; but the truths of religion seemed to have no effect upon him—his heart was one wild rebellion, untamed and unruly; and it was in

this condition of mind that I first found him.

We reached Nice before the great heat of the day set in, on a Sunday morning; but it was already hot and very dusty, and I was not sorry to consign Giannetto to the care of my Italian servant Beppo, and retire to wash and change my clothes. My daughters, not expecting my return till the following day, had gone to church; and so, tired with my early start, and rendered drowsy by the increasing heat, I lay down on Helen's luxurious sofa and fell asleep.

I was awakened by the entrance of Beppo, who came to ask for orders. I told him I had none to give; but he still lingered, and at last said, "Does the Signor Conte know anything about the young country lad he has brought home?"

Knowing that Beppo was the kindest-hearted fellow in the world, I told him briefly the history of Giannetto. I saw that he was touched.

"Poor boy, poor fellow!" he kept repeating; "and I smiled at the queer noises he makes, beast that I am! And the Signore says that they mocked at him? *Diamine!* they deserve to have their tongues cut! If you will excuse me, I fly to see that they have not stinted him in his macaroni. They are misers in this hotel, veritable misers—and their wine of Asti no better than a *vin du pays*."

Beppo was darting off, when I stopped him, being anxious to know what Giannetto was doing with himself down-stairs. Beppo twisted his hands together—"It was for that I asked the Signor Conte if he knew who and what he was. He is strange! but very strange! First, he sits down, then he stands up, then he walks backwards and forwards thus"—and Beppo shamled about the room, till I could scarcely

forbear laughing; "then he sits again, till a new idea strikes him—he leans out of the window, he walks anew. *Corpo di Bacco!* what a restless individual it is! One or two have spoken to him. Misé Brown, the maid of the Signorine, said something to him—a compliment, a remark, who can tell?—but he made such a scowl at her, that she fled to me for protection, and has not ventured into the room since."

"Never mind, Beppo," I said; "you now know that it is all the restlessness of suspense. You see that he hopes that this may prove the turning-point of his whole life."

"But must he wait?" asked Beppo, with his usual energy. "Will not the Signor Conte write at once? There is the Doctor Bartolommei; to be sure he always goes into the country on Sundays. Then the Doctor Simon—he might come! But no, he is this day at Mentone—a consultation—an English Milord is there ill; and this morning he was sent for even out of his bed, and went off in a vetturino-carriage at full gallop. But how about the English doctor who attends our young lady? The Signor Conte has but to command—I speed to the English church; he will be there with his wife; I wait till he comes out; I bring him with me. Have I your permission?"

"Patience, patience, Beppo! the dinner! Man of energy, you forget the dinner!—*Chi va piano*——"

"*Va sano*; the Signor Conte is right—he is quite right; the poor lad must wait."

Early in the afternoon I wrote to the English doctor who was attending my daughter, briefly stating the case, and begging him to come as soon as possible. I received an answer that I might expect him after the afternoon service, which,

as the weather was hot, began at five o'clock.

About half-past four, Amy and I left our villa, intending to go to church; but as it was still too early, we lingered on our way, unwilling to arrive too soon. A curve in the road brought us in sight of Giannetto, leaning moodily against a tree, and I went up to speak to him. I could see by the expression of his face that the strain on his nerves was very great, and thought it kinder not to leave him quite to himself; so, telling Amy that we must give up the afternoon service, I asked her if she could think of anything we could take him to hear or see that would prevent his mind from dwelling too much on the subject of his anxieties. Amy thought for a moment, and then said, "I have heard that the famous Franciscan Fra Geronimo preaches at Santa Lucia this afternoon at four o'clock; the sermon must be going on now, and it is said that the effect he produces is wonderful. Why not take him there?" I thought that at all events we might try it; so, desiring Giannetto to follow us, we took our way to Santa Lucia. The streets were crowded as we passed; all the happy-looking peasants from the country round seemed to have flocked together to enjoy the Sunday afternoon; they chattered gaily as they strolled along, interchanging merry greetings, delighting in their well-earned holiday. A little child, with his hands full of flowers, passed us with his mother, a comely peasant-woman: the child looked wistfully over his shoulder at Giannetto; something on his face gave him a wish to comfort him, for suddenly darting back, he thrust the flowers into his hands.

We reached Santa Lucia, and found it full of people, who had thronged from far and near to hear the celebrated Franciscan preach.

The sermon was apparently half over, but I would not for worlds have missed the part of it we heard. The theme was Patience; the text, "Wait ye upon the Lord."

The face of Fra Geronimo was refined, and thin to attenuation; the large eyes hollow and sunken, but gleaming as if the very soul looked through them upon this outer world; his thin, nervous hands gesticulated incessantly; his voice, powerful and somewhat harsh, now resounded through the church, now sank to a whisper so thrilling that it penetrated to the farthest corner.

"For what are we sent into the world?" he was saying as we entered—"for what are we here? To what end are we created? Some say, to eat and drink; some say, to make money; some say, to love. There are who say, for pleasure; there are who say, for sin! I say—to suffer. Yes, brethren; I see you turn away your heads! For what are we sent, but to suffer? Look at the infant wailing as he comes into the world; mark the career of that child. Suffering begins at once; he suffers as he grows, he suffers as he learns, he suffers as he loves; behold, he suffers as he lives, he suffers as he dies! What would you? By suffering, the world was redeemed; by suffering, heaven must be won! And wherefore rebel? I say to you, brethren, take suffering to your hearts; bid it welcome. It is the greatest blessing that can be sent to you; it will wean you from this world, and raise your thoughts, your hopes, your prayers to heaven. You are men now—suffer, and you may be saints! Look on St Catherine, St John, St Peter—what were they but men and women like ourselves? Did not they, too, pass through the furnace of suffering? What are they now? Who can tell of the glory of

the Kingdom? Who can describe their robes of many colours, the jewels that adorn their brows? Behold," he cried, in a voice of thunder, bringing forward the large crucifix which stood in the pulpit—"behold, and see! Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow? Alas! the flesh is weak, and crying and wailing abound in the land—Rachel weeping for her children, and will not be comforted, because they are not. The dying wailing because they must die; the living weeping that they must live; the strong man laments that his strength endureth not, the weak that he has not known strength; the lame man bemoaneth that he cannot walk, the deaf that he cannot hear, the dumb that he cannot speak" (I felt Giannetto start and shiver). "I tell you, brethren, that for every pain endured here, a jewel is added to the crown, a joy to the heaven to come!"

The friar sank upon his knees, his face hidden in his hands. No mortal ear heard the prayer that was going up to God; but we knew that he was interceding for the multitude around him—"I pray, not that ye may be taken away, but that ye may endure unto the end."

Slowly, and in awed silence, the crowd dispersed; and out of the dark church, from the faint smell of flowers and incense, we passed into full sunshine again. I looked at Giannetto: the beads of perspiration stood on his brow; his hands were clenched with a force that must have given actual pain. I longed for the power of reading what was passing in his mind. Was it still rebellion that vexed his spirit, or had even a faint idea of the preacher's high and lofty meaning penetrated into the bitter, saddened heart? Amy was struggling with her tears.

Calm and lovely it all looked in the throbbing light, silent but for

the quiet, even splash of the sea ; the air was heavy with odours from the gardens of violets and roses, and the warm scent of the sweet-bay rose up as we trod the branches which had been allowed to grow too luxuriantly, almost across the path.

Under the verandah, overhung with cool, shadowy vine-leaves, Helen's couch had been drawn out ; and there she lay, basking in the warmth, and looking better and stronger this evening than I had seen her for many a long day. The doctor had just arrived, and, with a strange feeling of anxiety and excitement, I called Giannetto, and led the way indoors.

The interview was not long. As I had feared, he held out no hopes whatever. Dumb from his birth ! who had ever heard of such being cured ? The fact which seemed to debar all hope was, that the doctor found the organs of speech perfect, only the power of utterance absent. He added, "You had better undeceive him at once—science is of no avail here ; nothing but a miracle could impart a power denied by nature."

My conscience smote me when I heard the verdict. I could not help feeling that it might have been better to have left Giannetto undisturbed, vaguely hopeful, in his village-home, rather than thus to have crushed all hope for ever.

After the English doctor's departure, I told Giannetto, as gently as I could, what he had said, adding that he should see Dr Simon on the morrow, so that he should have more than one opinion on the matter. He stood without moving while I was speaking, and then, with a gentle, subdued manner, that went to my heart and brought the tears to my eyes, he took my hand and kissed it.

When Beppo came up to put out the lights that night, I asked anxiously what Giannetto was doing down-stairs. "He sits like a statue," was the reply. "I spoke to him ; I told him the English doctors knew nothing—were ignorants—bah ! one must tell lies sometimes—and I tell him the Doctor Simon, whom he will see to-morrow, is a marvel—a wonder ; and I think he still hopes."

Beppo's sympathetic eyes were almost overflowing ; so I did not reproach him, as perhaps I ought to have done, for still holding out delusive hopes.

The next morning M. Simon, the French doctor, called and saw Giannetto, at an hour earlier than he had appointed, and unfortunately while I was out. When I returned home I was met by Beppo at the door, with a face full of consternation—Giannetto had disappeared.

CHAPTER III.

I was very much alarmed when the whole day passed, and I heard and saw nothing of Giannetto. I could only hope and trust that he had gone straight home again. Beppo told me that the French doctor had been very harsh and rough. "Why could he not wait till my return ?" I asked ; for I felt that my presence would certainly

have made things easier. "Ah, Signor mio, so I said ; but he would not wait. I told him you would be in at once ; but he would not wait. That doctor is a beast—a heart of stone—a horror ! 'Morbieu !' he said, 'do you take me for a saint, that I can cure a man who is dumb from his birth ? Or would you make a fool of me ?' They are all alike,

these doctors; they think if a poor fellow is of the lower class they may be as insolent to him as they like."

"And Giannetto, how did he bear it?"

"Poor fellow, he ground his teeth and clenched his hands; he went off to the kitchen, took down his bundle, and walked off without so much as good-day to you! I called after him to bid him be in for dinner, for I was sure that the Signor Conte would wish to see him again; but he paid no attention, and walked straight on."

This was all I could learn from Beppo. I next went to see Dr Simon, whom I found very much disposed to be impertinent. I could not help reproaching him strongly for his harsh treatment of Giannetto, and finally told him of his abrupt departure, and asked him what he would feel if he heard that he had committed suicide? He looked as much scared as I had hoped he would be, notwithstanding his "Ah, bah!" and I left him to digest the unpalatable idea.

I was met by Beppo in a sort of triumph, brandishing a broken piece of slate. Before leaving, Giannetto had written a few words on it, broken off the piece, and left it lying on the kitchen table. "Dear and noble Sir," were his words, "receive my thanks a thousand times; it grieves me not to see you again. I hasten home; for the heart will not bear to wish you good-bye.—GIOVAN-BATTISTA NENCINI."

There was nothing to be done. I determined to make another expedition to San Jacopo before finally leaving Nice, and meantime to do my best to forget the sad eyes that constantly haunted me.

The late autumn waned into winter, and it proved a bad, wet season. Helen caught fresh cold, and for some time we were very anxious

about her. We grew tired of bustling, dusty Nice—Amy especially hated it; the perpetual sameness of the tideless sea wearied and dispirited her. It was quite a relief when, one night, a frightful storm came up: the sea lashed itself into waves mountains high, which broke roaring on to the beach; the lightning played hissing over their foam-crowned tops; and a never-ceasing roll of thunder shook the purple pall-like sky. I stood out on the balcony, watching the sea, till the rain came on, suddenly, tremendously; it fell more like the breaking of a waterspout than mere rain—drenching, pitiless, tearing down shrubs and trees, turning the roads into running rivers, and the garden into a sheet of water.

I stood watching it for a long time, wondering whether it would do much harm, when it flashed across me that San Jacopo must be suffering severely, closed in as it was by rocks and sea. Before going to bed, I resolved to pay another visit to my friends there. But *l'homme propose, Dieu dispose*. It was more than a month before I was able to leave Nice and carry out my intention. As before, I walked there, knapsack on my back, spending about three nights on the way. The storm had done considerable damage to the main road, portions of which had been washed away, and only rudely mended to allow the diligences to run; some of the bridges appeared actually dangerous, torn and shaken as they had been by the fearful force of the swollen torrents. Seeing these signs of devastation, I became more uneasy than ever as I drew near San Jacopo.

It was on a bright sunny morning that I arrived, and at sight of me a general shout was raised by children of all sizes and ages, who went rushing off to tell the *Curato*

that the English Signore had come back.

I walked on through the streets, when I was suddenly met by Carola, running as fast as she could; she had heard from the children of my arrival. She caught hold of my hands, she kissed them, crying between sobs and laughter, "Thanks! thanks be to God, you are come again! And you bring me news? You have seen him? You know where he is? Did he return to you? Ah, answer! answer, Signore, for the love of heaven! my boy, is he with you?"

My very heart turned cold within me. What! had he never returned? Where was he, then? Just as I was about to speak, a gentle, firm hand was laid on Carola's shoulder, and the good *Curato*, parting the little crowd of children who were gaping round us, took me by the hand and drew me into the nearest house. Carola followed, repeating constantly, "Answer, Signore!—dear Signore, answer! where is he?"

I turned breathlessly to the priest, "And do you mean that he has never been home?"

"Yes, yes—he has been home; but he has gone again, and you then have not seen him lately?" "Alas! no"—and poor Carola sank down on a chair, sobbing as if her heart would break. Another woman, the owner of the house, whom I had not noticed before, but who, I afterwards learnt, was Pietro's wife, Baldovinetta Zei, sat down by her, and, unable to offer any consolation, stroked her hand and cried also.

The *Curato* looked sadly changed, as if years had passed over his head in those few months. He glanced pityingly at the women, and then said, "Since Vossignoria has nothing to tell them, perhaps he will follow me. I should like to tell

him what has passed, and hear what he thinks of it."

I rose and followed him. As we left the house, I heard a little low cry from Carola. Alas! she saw in my departure the vanishing of another hope.

The streets were crowded with people, watching me curiously as I followed the priest, who led me straight through the piazza to his own house. We entered, and with a movement of his hand he bade me be seated.

It was a small square room, the walls washed with yellow paint, and adorned with a series of coloured prints of the stations of the Cross. Over the little stove hung a rudely-carved wooden crucifix. The only ornament in the room consisted of a little coloured wax figure of the infant Saviour asleep, lying under a glass case, and with two brass vases of gaudy artificial flowers on each side of it. The furniture, a square deal table and two wooden chairs, was of the roughest description.

The priest seated himself opposite to me, and leaning his arms on the table, fixed his eyes on my face, and said, very impressively, "Will Vossignoria tell me exactly what the doctors said?" I repeated their opinions as nearly, word for word, as I could recollect. The priest shuddered slightly, and repeated, to my surprise, "And Vossignoria assures me, on his sacred word of honour, that the doctors declared a cure to be impossible?" "It is too true," I answered; "they laughed at the very idea. They pronounced the dumbness to proceed from a defect, an incompleteness (if you may so call it), which no science can remedy—that it is impossible, in short, that he should obtain the power of speech now, or at any future time."

The priest was silent for a moment, evidently thinking deeply;

then he turned to me and said, "Vossignoria will be astonished at what I have to tell him, and perhaps he may be able to help me to understand it. He remembers, doubtless, that it was on the Monday morning that poor Giannetto left Nice: well, he must have walked night and day; for on Wednesday, after I had finished celebrating low mass, I found him crouched upon his knees in a corner of the church, having stolen in unobserved. He looked ill, but very ill, with a somewhat of despair in his face, which alarmed us all. For days he crept about his work like one in a dream. At that season the fish came in in shoals, and the village was very prosperous. I had at this time many talks with Pietro—I entreated, I implored him to let Giannetto alone, and I believe that he did; at least, he promised me he would do so: but, alas! youth is youth. I have reason to think that there was occasional ridicule at Giannetto's folly in having hoped to be cured, and that more than once he overheard it. On one occasion, for instance, a man came to the village who had been a singer in the chorus at the opera at Florence. He was a good-natured, merry fellow; he laughed, and joked, and sang incessantly. Alas! my poor Giannetto, he has a passionate love for music! He was never tired of listening; and when the singer sang, his face became quite softened and happy. The man only stayed two days, and then went away. The fishermen, I fear—I am sure—laughed at Giannetto a good deal about that; but they did not see him afterwards as I did, lying face downwards in the vineyard, weeping his very heart out. I was glad—yes, Signore, strange as you may think it, I was glad to see him weep, for I hoped that it would soften the hardness

of his despair. Alas! has Vossignoria ever seen a torrent burst its bed and tear down shrubs and trees in its headlong career? *Santi Apostoli!* such a torrent was the grief of my Giannetto. It left the rock more bare and hard than before, and swept away the small herbs and flowers, the little charities of life, till I scarcely knew him again. Alas! he was to me as a dear son, and I have borne with him in patience and in tears."

Much moved, I held out my hand to the priest, who pressed it gratefully, and resumed his story.

"Without doubt, Vossignoria saw something of the frightful storm we had; it is now a month ago. Alas! it has put an end to the prosperity of the place for a long time to come. Has the Signore observed more than half the olive-trees are gone? and we looked much to them for help when times were bad. Old Nicolo's cottage, that stood near the hill in its own little vineyard, was completely washed away. Has Vossignoria remarked a little thread of water which comes down the hill just above the town? Well, that stream became a raging river. By the mercy of God it did not burst the embankment behind the church, but it carried away Nicolo's cottage and many a shed, and destroyed the gardens, and, worst of all, drowned two of the poor mules; their bodies drifted out to the sea, and we saw them no more. The storm began about five o'clock in the evening, and at the first sign of its approach, the boats all came homewards swiftly as birds on the wing. I stood on the shore and counted them as they came in, one after another, and the women stood with me watching. The morning had been fine and clear, and many of the boats had gone far out to sea—much further than usual—

and we were very anxious. About seven o'clock the sea rose frightfully, and three or four of the boats were still missing—Masaniello's, our oldest fisherman, Pietro's, Andrea Castagno's, and Giannetto's. The wind was so high, that many a time we had to lie flat on the beach to avoid being blown off our feet; and the women wept and wailed incessantly. About half-past seven the broken timbers of a boat were washed ashore. Ah! if you had seen how the women flung themselves upon them, and almost fought as they strove to recognise the fragments. Alas! a fearful cry from poor Andrea's wife told that she knew only too well that she was now a widow. Andrea's boat had been old and crazy, and he was building a new one—poor fellow! He was not a good man, but she loved him, after the fashion of women. His body was washed up on the bank the next morning, about a mile from here along the coast. Later still, Masaniello came in; he had fought hard for his life, and was quite exhausted. We were now but three on the beach; and it was so dark, that but for the fitful glare of the lightning we could have seen nothing. The two women, Carola and Baldovinetta, clung to each other, and I stood by them. Santa Maria! it was a fearful night! All through those long hours we kept the church-bell ringing—I hoped it might be some help in guiding the boats. About twelve o'clock we heard a loud shout, which resounded even through the roar of the thunder, and a flash of lightning showed us a little boat, tossed like a nut-shell from wave to wave, but coming steadily onward. It was hard to bear the long pauses of complete darkness in that terrible suspense, and I could only help by kneeling and praying aloud. At last there came a crash

on the shingle, a cry of exultation, and Pietro and Baldovinetta were in each other's arms. Thanks be to God! thanks, thanks, O Madre Santissima, he was saved!"

The priest paused in his narrative, and I could scarcely control my impatience. To my surprise, he suddenly turned to me again, and said, "Vossignoria is quite certain about what the doctors said?—there can be no mistake?—other doctors would have said the same?" "Quite certain," I repeated—I fear somewhat impatiently. "It was a fool's errand from the first; the case is absolutely an incurable one. But finish, I beg of you, finish your story."

The priest looked at me wistfully. "Alas!" he said, "there is, then, no doubt that it could not be cured? But pardon, a thousand pardons! you wish me to continue. Well, all night long Carola and I waited on the beach; she seated herself on the ground, clasping her hands round her knees, and watching in agony. About two o'clock the storm began to abate, and the clouds broke; a wild moon broke out, and shone fitfully on the boiling waves. The moon grew paler, and the first sign of dawn began to streak the heavens; the wind sank to a hollow moaning murmur, and we sat on, waiting and watching, Maria Santissima! it was fearful! As the light increased, I could see Carola's face—it was like that of the dead; she could scarcely ~~break~~—her voice sounded faint and far off.

"As the morning drew slowly on, it became bitterly cold; and, worn out and drenched as she was, I tried to persuade Carola to go indoors, but she would not; she sat rocking herself backwards and forwards, and moaning. At last—and how long it was it is difficult to tell—I heard a sound from the sea

as of singing, the strange wild singing of something that was rather a sound than a song! Carola shuddered violently and grasped my arm, 'What is that?' she cried; 'Santa Madonna! what can that be?' I know not why, but an indescribable horror seemed to seize on me also. 'It is nothing, Carola, nothing at all,' I kept saying. We, however, strained our eyes through the gloom, and, oh heaven! we saw a boat coming towards us, at one time riding on the waves, at another disappearing in the deep trough. Heaven help me, I cannot think of it now! It was washed in to our very feet; and Giannetto, our Giannetto, stood safe and in life before us! Signor Conte, Signore, you shall not say—you cannot say—it was incurable! His tongue was loosened. I repeat, it could not have been incurable—for he spake plain!"

The perspiration stood like beads on the brow of the priest, and he grasped my arm—"What do you think of it? Answer! say—will you not tell me what you think of it?"

What could I say? I never was so astonished in my life. I could only repeat, "Cured, you say? cured?"

"Yes, yes, cured—why not? I repeat, why not? Nobody can say a thing is incurable!"

"It is wonderful, marvellous! And Giannetto, he is happy? he is enraptured—grateful?"

"Alas!" answered the priest, loosening his hold on my arm, and sinking back in his chair, "a very strange and fearful change has come over Giannetto. The day after our wonderful deliverance, I held a thanksgiving service. I had services all day long. My parishioners flocked into the church—they knelt all day; all were there, from Masaniello down to Tonino, Pietro's youngest child. Giannetto alone

was missing. I went in search of him; I pointed out to him that, of all, he was the one from whom most thanks were due. He refused; he turned on his heel with a scornful gesture; nothing would induce him to enter the church. Not a word of thanksgiving has he offered since, nor would he listen to counsel from myself. The neighbours who had mocked him before now shunned and avoided him, and even Carola grew terrified. It is now a week that he has been gone; he kissed his mother coldly, as if all love for her was dead in his heart; he passed Pietro in the street with a low-breathed curse; and we have neither seen nor heard of him since. God forgive him! terrible fears haunt me at times that all is not with him as it should be—that God has for a while forgotten him, or given him over to the powers of evil. But, for pity's sake, do not repeat that the doctors said that it was incurable; it could not be that it was incurable. Giannetto, my son, my son! rather had I seen thee washed dead to my feet, than have lived to hear thee forswear the God that made thee!"

I was horrified by the strange words of the priest; the more I thought of it, the more it puzzled me.

"Then Giannetto gave no account of the manner in which he recovered his speech? no explanation whatever?"

"None. He absolutely refused to answer any questions; it was his own affair, he said. Poor Carola! At first her joy was very great, but it was soon dashed to the ground; for Giannetto was no longer the dutiful and tender son she had loved so well. I cannot, cannot understand it. I try not to think about it, for it makes me hard and bitter towards Pietro and his friends. I cannot help fearing that it is to a

great degree owing to their cruel taunts that he has been tempted into something wild and accursed."

It was indeed a strange story, and left me with an uneasy feeling—a vain wish that my own part in

the tragedy had been left unplayed. I left money with the priest, who was very grateful, for times were no longer so prosperous at San Jacopo as they had been; and I returned to Nice sad and bewildered.

CHAPTER IV.

Five or six years passed in England of a busy life had almost effaced any recollection of Giannetto from my mind; or, I should perhaps say, had reduced the whole strange story to a sort of dream.

Amy was married; Helen had quite recovered her health; and nothing had occurred to cause our return to Nice, when we suddenly made up our minds to go to Italy for the winter, for the pleasure of the change. For a long time I hesitated between Rome and Florence, finally deciding in favour of the latter, as being the best for masters for Helen. We at first thought of going by the Riviera route, in order to revisit our old haunts; but, hearing that we were likely to be delayed by the badness of the roads, we changed our minds, and crossed Mont Cenis, taking our way straight to Florence. Some friends had already secured us a villa half-way up to Fiesole, and there we took up our abode.

Those who know Florence as it is now, can scarcely realise what it used to be before the innumerable changes and innovations, especially on the side of Fiesole. It is sad to miss those grand old walls, throwing their deep cool shadows over the houses; and your recollections are confounded by finding yourself wandering in streets and squares, where in former days the country, as it were, kissed the town.

Our villa was lovely. About half-way up the ascent to Fiesole you come upon a little village,

grouped picturesquely round its church, San Domenico by name. The road leading up to it is bordered by cypress hedges; and here, as one walks, one invariably finds a small flock of lean, bearded goats stretching their almost unnaturally long bodies to crop the uppermost shoots. Before reaching the church, you turn to the right down a rather steep lane, and about a quarter of a mile brings you to the gate of our villa.

The view over the Val d'Arno was a constant source of delight to us; for hours we sat on the terrace outside our windows sketching, impatient at the impossibility of transferring to paper those soft and delicate tints. I have heard some people complain of the sameness of Florentine colouring, and it is possible that it may be so; but the sameness is inexpressibly beautiful, the cool grey of the dusky olive-trees giving the tone to the whole country. Every evening the setting sun flooded the valley, till it seemed to float in lilac and crimson; and far away on the clear horizon, faintly shadowed out, you have the broken lines of the Carrara mountains. That was the hour for hopelessly throwing brush and easel aside, and drinking in the scene with an ecstasy one seldom knows out of Italy: it fades, it passes away, that wondrous glow; and far and near, from the great bells of the Duomo in the plain, to the faint tinkling sound from the convent high above us on the heights of Fiesole, comes the sum-

mons to prayer, and every peasant removes his hat, and lays down his tools, to cross himself and mutter an "Ave Maria."

We led a quiet, uneventful life that winter. Every morning Helen drove down into Florence to her lessons, or had masters at the villa; and we sometimes spent the rest of the day sight-seeing in the town, or wandering in the country round.

One day Beppo came into my room, flourishing a paper wildly in his hand. "Signor Conte, Signor Conte!" he shouted—"mad that I am, I forgot to show you this; and now it will be too late to take tickets. It was that cook; he has been worrying again with his eternal demands for more cognac for his puddings. Little enough of it goes into our dining-room, I tell him. And I forgot to show the Signor Conte this"—and he began reading in a loud voice, "'For two nights only. The famous *primo tenore*, Signor Giovanni.' And the Signore has never heard him! What a chance—and thrown away owing to that *maledetto* cook!"

"What is it, Beppo? who is he?"

"Who is he? What! has not the Signore heard of the new tenor—the singer who has made such a *furor* in Russia, and who has now come to sing for the first time in Italy, though he is an Italian born and bred?"

"I have heard of him, papa," cried Helen, "and I should so much like to hear him. My master gave him some lessons two years ago, and he says that he is the most magnificent *tenore di forza* he ever heard in his life."

"True, it is quite true, Signorina. It is said that when you have heard him sing, you can listen to no one else. And he has studied both at the Scala and in Russia. But speak only, and I fly to see whether it is too late to

secure places. The Grand Duke himself is to be there."

I gave Beppo permission, and he darted off. Alas! it was too late; every seat was taken in the Pergola theatre. Helen was much disappointed; but she insisted upon my walking down on the chance of being able to get in, to stand at least for a quarter of an hour, and report whether the new tenor was really as great a singer as he was supposed to be. In vain I assured her that wherever we might go, these great singers were sure to appear in time, in all probability in London, the very next season. She insisted, and—prevailed.

It was such a fine, cold, frosty evening, that I enjoyed the walk down to Florence very much. I went rather late to the opera-house, and found, as I had expected, not a single vacant seat—some, indeed, had been doubly let for half the night to each person. Just, however, as I was turning away, the box-keeper called me back. "Look you, Signore," he said; there is a little space—a *very* little space—within the door, where I have not yet put a chair. Would the Signore mind having a stool—a *very* little stool—put in there for him to sit on? He will not see very well; but, after all, one comes to hear these things, not to see." At this moment a burst of applause, loud and long, resounded through the house; and, my curiosity vividly excited, I accepted the offer of the box-keeper, and seated myself on the stool—the truly "very little stool"—he provided for me.

Every one knows how critical is a Florentine audience—how unforgiving if time and tune are not perfect—how chary of their applause, how lavish of their hisses; but to-night the whole house was carried away by its enthusiasm.

The piece was 'Lucrezia Borgia';

and as I came in, Giovanni was singing "Di pescator ignobile." It was the most lovely voice I could have imagined—round, and full, and sweet—evidently having reached its full perfection; the style also was highly finished; there was no rawness, no want of study,—all that art, combined with the rarest natural gifts, could do, made the new tenor's singing the most beautiful thing I could have dreamt of.

The time passed only too quickly, and the first two acts were over before I began to look about me. At this moment the head of the box-keeper was suddenly thrust in at the door, and he broke in abruptly on my meditations.

"Signore, Signore Inglese! will he look at that box at the end?—no, not that one—the stage-box. Does he see a lady there—a young lady, with an old lady beside her? That is Signora Giovanni, the wife of the *primo tenore*. Beautiful, is she not? And that is her mother, Signora Celeste. They have taken that box for both nights—they say she always goes to hear her husband sing; and she waits in the carriage for him to come out when it is over."

"Is she an Italian?" I asked.

"Italian? Most certainly. She is Florentine; her father is an *impiegato*; he holds office under the Government—a man of position here, the Cavaliere Mattei; and it was thought a poor marriage for one of his daughters, when, two years ago, she took an opera-singer as her husband. But, *Cospetto!* she is likely to be the richest of the family."

The man withdrew his head as abruptly as it had been protruded; and, with enhanced curiosity, I raised my glass to look at the occupants of the stage-box.

Signora Celeste was what most Italian women become after a certain

age, singularly ugly and haggard, a perfect foil to her daughter who sat beside her. Signora Giovanni could not have been more than eighteen or nineteen at that time, but she looked older. The contour of her face was perfect, her eyes very large, and so dark, that they made the clear olive complexion yet paler by the contrast. She was dressed in black, and wore the heavy masses of her hair turned back from her brow, after the fashion of almost all Florentine women. But I was even more charmed by the extreme sweetness of her expression than by her beauty, which was very considerable.

Giovanni was ill supported on the stage. Binda, the bass, was a loud and rather rough singer; the *prima donna* sang well, though her voice was past its prime; and the contralto was mediocre: but the public had only eyes and ears for him, and good-naturedly ignored their shortcomings. Giovanni was a fine-looking man, and apparently made no use of the paints and artificial helps to good-looks generally supposed to be indispensable on the stage.

While I was looking at him, it suddenly occurred to me that somehow—somewhere—I had seen him before, and I could not get rid of the impression. So strong was it, that I determined to wait outside after the performance for the chance of seeing him in plain clothes, and satisfying my curiosity.

The piece ended, and the people flocked out. I stood in the lobby, idly watching them as they passed, and listening to their remarks. The crowd gave way a little, and Signora Celeste and her daughter passed through and entered their carriage, which drove off a little way, and then stopped (as the box-keeper had told me) to wait for Giovanni.

At last the whole audience had slowly dispersed, and I began to think myself a fool, and prepared to start homewards, when I heard voices behind me, and the *prima donna's* carriage was called for. She came sweeping forward, her scarlet *bourous* thrown over one shoulder. "Bravo, Signor Giovanni!" she said as she passed, glancing back at the rest of the singers who were following her.

Giovanni bowed gravely.

"*Corpo di Bacco*, what bitter cold!" muttered Binda, as he took Giovanni's arm and drew his cloak round him. The truth flashed across me, and suddenly, without thinking, I exclaimed aloud, "Giannetto!" The great tenor started violently and looked round at me. He made, however, no sign of recognition, but walked on down the street with his companions. I heard Binda's deep voice—"Good night, my friend," and Giovanni's short answer, "The same to you;" and then, concluding that I was mistaken, and had been deceived by a casual resemblance, I lit a cigar, and turned towards Fiesole.

I heard swift steps behind me, and felt my hands grasped suddenly. "Signore, Signor Conte! is it really you?"

"Then it is Giannetto!" I exclaimed; "will wonders never cease?"

"Hush, hush!" said the tenor, looking uneasily round him, and especially at the carriage, which still waited a little way down the street. "The Signore will understand—circumstances alter. There are times when it is best not to remember too much—he has understood!"

"I understand," I answered rather sadly. "But, Signor Giovanni, come and see me at home; I should like to see you again where we can converse more easily."

"Willingly, most willingly," he answered. I gave him my address; and, grasping my hand cordially, he left me. I watched his slight active figure as he went down the street, jumped into the carriage, and drove off; and, hardly believing that I could be in my right senses, I returned home.

The next morning I told Helen what had happened. She was astonished beyond measure. We tried once more to get seats in the opera-house for Giovanni's last performance, but did not succeed, much to her disappointment.

When three or four days had passed without my hearing or seeing anything of Giannetto, I began to think that he wished to avoid me. I heard of him everywhere in Florence, received and courted in society, and very popular. His wife went with him, and was in the habit of accompanying him on the pianoforte when he vouchsafed to sing in a private house—a favour but seldom conferred.

One day, however, towards the end of the week, a little open fly drove up to the door; and Beppo, in a slightly awe-struck voice, announced Signor Giovanni.

I looked at Beppo, and saw that he felt very much puzzled. I fancied he had recognised Giannetto, and hastily sent Helen after him to warn him not to say a word to his fellow-servants till I had had time to speak to him.

I motioned to Giannetto to seat himself, which he did so much with the air of a gentleman and equal, that I was more and more astonished.

"I must apologise, Signor Conte," he began, "for not having sooner availed myself of your permission to call upon you; but you are doubtless aware that a man in my position has engagements he cannot escape from—and I study much still, for

I have had to combat with a certain inflexibility of voice, which at last begins to yield."

"Inflexibility!" I exclaimed, "surely——"

He smiled. "I am rejoiced that you did not remark it."

At the risk of being thought inquisitive, and possibly impertinent, I could not help saying, "Giannetto, ever since I first saw you, I have felt the deepest interest in your career; would it annoy you were I to ask how you attained your present position—in short, what your history has been since you left San Jacopo?"

"Signor Conte," he answered, "you have but to command—I will tell you."

"First," I began hesitatingly—"believe me, it is not idle curiosity that prompts my question—can you not tell me in what manner your voice was restored?"

He made a haughty and impatient movement, and the red blood mounted into his face, dyeing it to the very roots of his hair.

I saw I had gone too far. "I ask a thousand pardons," I began; but he cut me short. "It is unnecessary," he said. "The Signor Conte has a right to ask what he pleases. I must also reserve to myself the option of answering or remaining silent as I think necessary, and on this sole point I cannot satisfy him."

"When I left San Jacopo I had but a few *lire* in my pocket. They were, however, enough to enable me to get to Turin, walking all the way. I was at first almost starved; but I kept up heart, learnt one or two of the popular songs of the year, and sang them in the *cafés* of the poor people for a few *soldi* at a time. The Signor Conte has heard my voice—it was as good then as it is now, though, certainly, it was quite

uncultivated. It gained me a small reputation which spread rapidly.

"At last, one day I was sent for by an American gentleman, who had heard of me through his servants. Who or what he was I know not; he was a certain Smit of Boston. He made me sing to him, and then offered to pay for a musical education for me, at Milan, at Florence—in short, wherever I would—provided that I would bind myself ten years to pay him the half of all I should gain from the time when my education should be completed. I asked for time to consider his proposal, and consulted a certain Nicolini, a music-seller, with whom I had made a sort of acquaintance. He strongly advised me to refuse, which I did, though it was much against my own inclination.

"The American left Turin. I then offered myself at the opera as a chorus-singer, and in that way earned enough to get through the year. At last, to my astonishment, the manager of the theatre offered to pay for my education if I would undertake to sing in his theatre for three months a-year for five years, after I became a singer.

"I again consulted Nicolini, who this time advised me to accept. I chose the Scala by his advice, and studied hard, supporting myself meanwhile as I best could. Vos-signoria knows that I can write, thanks to the priest of San Jacopo; and I taught myself to copy music, and was much employed by musicians as a copyist. But it was difficult to support myself at that time.

"I used to copy music a good deal for the Cavaliere Mattei, a political agent of the Grand Duke of Tuscany at Milan.

"The Cavaliere was a great *diletante*, passionately fond of music, and a violinist himself. When he found out how very poor I was, he helped me with both money and

good advice. Ah! he has a good heart, that Filippo Mattei! He allowed me also to consort with his family; his wife, Signora Celeste, was kindness itself, and many a word of encouragement she has spoken to me since I first made acquaintance with her. The children—there were four—became my friends. The eldest of them, Elvira, was then still a child; she was fourteen years old, but she was so good, so dear, that even then I began to hope that at some future time her father might give her to me. I never concealed my birth,” he continued, proudly; “they all know that I was but a poor fisherman. But more than that I have not told, and none can say that I have done an injustice. But patience! do I not weary the Signore? It is too good of him to be thus interested.”

“No, no; pray, Giannetto, go on.”

“Well, my education was completed—that is to say, the Scala pronounced it completed—within a year; and I returned to Turin, and sang there for the first time in public, with a certain success. The manager was generous; he allowed me a good half of the three months’ gains, and by his recommendations enabled me to obtain a first-rate engagement at the Court of St Petersburg for two years. After I had been there awhile, I made much money—a real fortune; and I wrote to the manager asking him for what sum he would release me from my engagement. He named a very large one. But I paid it, every *soldo*, and rejoiced in feeling that I was once more my own master.

“Two years ago I came to Florence, having obtained a short holiday. I found the Mattei returned here. Elvira was not yet betrothed; she was seventeen, beautiful as an angel, and good as she was beautiful. I hardly dared ask Mattei, but he gave a free consent; and my

Elvira accompanied me back to St Petersburg as my wife. I am happy, Signor Conte; do you not look on me as the happiest and luckiest of men?”

He laughed a curious little grating laugh.

I looked at him hesitatingly, and then said, “And, Giannetto, can you tell me nothing of the mother—of Carola? She must be getting old now, and feeling lonely—a widow, bereaved also of her child.”

He answered hastily, “She is very well; I occasionally hear of her from the *Curato* of our village. She is a great lady now,” he added, smiling, “and need do no work but for her own pleasure; but I hear that she still lives in the little old house.”

“And the *Curato*, he also is well?”

“Yes, yes, quite well—that is, I believe so; but I have not been there myself, and he is the only man in the miserable little place that can read and write, and he is not a man to say much about himself.”

He spoke irritably, and I could well see that he disliked all allusion to his former condition.

Again I felt tempted to apologise, when a feeling of indignation cut me short. What right had he to feel like this towards his best and earliest friend? and, but for curiosity, I should hardly have prolonged the conversation. In spite of myself, there was a fascination about him, or rather in connection with his history, which I could not resist.

When he next spoke it was in a very different manner—“May I ask the Signor Conte if the young ladies are well? Are they settled in life, or still with you?” And on hearing that Helen was still with me, he said, rather doubtfully, “I scarcely dare to ask it; but if you permitted it, might I present my wife to you and to the Signorina Helen? She would esteem it a

great honour, and dies already to kiss your hands, for I have told her that I lie under great obligations to you."

"Indeed," I interrupted hastily, "I must disclaim all gratitude from you. I have often regretted——" I stopped abruptly, for the dark flush once more rose almost painfully into Giannetto's face. He bowed gravely and said, "I must hope, Signor Conte, that my future career will give you no reason to regret having been the first to awaken my ambition. Will you consent to my request?"

I told him that Helen and I would call and pay our respects to his wife, and asked for his address.

"We are at present staying with the Mattei, No. 12 Borgo Pinti," he answered. "And the Signora Celeste will feel much gratified at the honour you will confer upon her, in visiting Elvira at her house. And now, Signore, I relieve you of my presence." He rose and took up his hat. "I have the honour to wish you good morning."

And bowing low, he took his leave in the same gentlemanlike manner with which he had entered.

CHAPTER V.

Helen and I called at the Palazzo where the Mattei family were living a very few days after Giannetto's visit.

Up a long, carpetless stair we climbed, and arrived at an iron grate on the third floor, where we pulled, or rather shook, a dilapidated bell. For a long time no one came; then the face of a housemaid looked through the opposite door, and a shrill voice shouted the usual Italian question, "Chi è?"

"Is the Signora Mattei in the house?" inquired Beppo, in reply. "Of course she is, at this hour," answered the woman; and drawing a key out of her pocket, she proceeded slowly to open the grate.

Beppo gave her my card, and she hurried away with it, leaving us standing on the landing-place. After a few moments she returned, and saying, "Enter, enter, Signore!" she led the way through a large empty anteroom into what was evidently used as a music-room.

It was a large room, the centre occupied by a grand piano, on the extremity of which lay masses of music, songs, accompaniments, and what looked like manuscript violin-music. Round the room were long

red-covered seats or divans. The walls were painted a pale-buff colour, and the curtains matched them in hue. Two or three tables stood at one end of the room, and on these were carefully arranged various trifling ornaments, such as photographs in cases, Paris *bonbonnières*, bits of Florentine mosaic, &c. &c.

Bidding us be seated, the servant fidgeted about the room a little, and then said, "Vossignori are foreigners?" Much amused, I told her we were English. "Ah!" she said, "doubtless the Signori have come a long, long way. La Signora Mattei dearly loves the English. She once, years ago, knew an English lady, and stayed two days——" She broke off; for a shrill voice shouted from the inner room, "Violante, O Violante!" "I come, I come!" she cried; and making a sort of deprecating shrug at me, as much as to say, "You see we can have no more conversation just now," she hurried out of the room.

We again waited some moments; then a door on the opposite side of the room opened, and a gentle, venerable old gentleman came forward. "S'accommodino—be seated, I beg,"

he began; "these Signori do us too much honour to call on us—on my daughter, I should rather say. La Signora Mattei is a woman of much spirit; she is busy at this hour, but she will be here directly." He was a fine-looking old man, with long, silky, white hair, and a very sweet, courteous expression, particularly when he smiled. His hands were covered with brown cloth mittens; and occasionally he kept up the old custom of slowly fumbling in his pocket for a large tortoise-shell snuff-box, which he made use of with much zest.

"I hope," he continued, "that the Signorina diverts herself in Florence? There is much that is interesting if she has a love of art. Perhaps she is herself an amateur, and occasionally studies in our galleries?"

I told him that we were staying at Florence much for purposes of study, and then proceeded to make him my compliments on the reputation of his son-in-law.

He bowed, laying his hand on his heart. "The Signor Conte is too good. Without doubt, Giovanni has talent; he will be a great singer. I tell him he should go to England. I was there myself once—it is now twenty years—and I know London well. Yes, yes; it is there he would make a fortune. They know nothing of our language, those English,—the Signor Conte is *Scorzese*, he speaks like a native,—but they appreciate the talent, and they pay well. I myself heard the Pasta sing, and heard the English say, 'Beautiful, beautiful! but what did she sing?—was it not German, or was it French?' Still, not the less do they pay well."

"I hope Signor Giovanni will come to England," said Helen, rather timidly; "at least he will find better support there in the theatre, for all the best artists find their way to London."

"Ah, it is a wonderful place!" continued the Cavaliere Mattei. "Without doubt, Florence appears very small to you; and my son-in-law tells me that St Petersburg——"

He was interrupted by the door flying open, and the abrupt entrance of Signora Celeste, followed by her daughter. It was as if a whirlwind had burst into the room. "Good morning, Signor Conte. Signorina Elena, I have the honour to salute you. I hope I see you in good health. It grieved me to hear from my son-in-law that you are not strong. Be seated. We have heard much of you from Giovanni. He tells me," she continued, without taking breath, "that he made acquaintance with you some years ago at Nice, and that he lies under obligations to you. We are grateful," she added; "you do us great honour in visiting us thus, and the opportunity of offering you our thanks we shall hold very dear."

I endeavoured to disclaim all thanks, but she did not pause.

"And the Signorina, does she divert herself in Florence? I fear but little goes on at this moment. She has without doubt visited the Cascine every Sunday afternoon? The Grand Duchess is almost always there, and it is very gay. Do the Signori contemplate being here for the Carnival? There are to be great doings this year; and certain Signori of the principal families are to have balls. The Signorina without doubt loves dancing? She is of an age to do so. Elvira loved it much formerly; but since she is married she is quite changed,—she thinks of nothing but her husband and child, and the music. Really, it is a trial of patience—a weariness—when she and her father and Giovanni begin with their everlasting music. Not a word can one get in. And what with the violin and the pianoforte, and now Binda, now La Caprera, coming in to practise with

Giovanni, life is a burden. The people in the streets come under the windows to listen, but I hope I may have put a stop to that; for when they are all listening, Violante and I are often obliged to throw water and vegetables out of the window. Can I help it?—bah! one must keep one's house clean!”

“Assuredly,” said the Cavaliere, mildly. “But wherefore thus outrage their feelings? Poor souls! it is to them a great diversion.”

She quietly ignored his words. “And the Signor Conte has taken the Villa Vacchini?” she continued. “La Signora Vacchini is one in a thousand! an excellent person; she is much my friend. Without doubt, it is her agent Signor Ettore Bonifazio who has arranged with these Signori? He is a good man; but, Santa Maria! what fat! he is a hill—a mountain! La Vacchini at one time had it in her mind to marry him; but I said to her, ‘Lucia, my dear, beware; it is a sack—a mountain—you would marry. An agitation—a slight fright—he is seized with an apoplexy, and you are again a widow!’ Had I not reason? And she is in good circumstances. She has a large hotel in the Piazza Nuova, which foreigners frequent much; and she has also the Villa Vacchini, and certain olive and vine yards in the hills near the Certosa. I hope,” she continued, suddenly breaking off, “that you remain satisfied that she does well by you?”

“Perfectly,” I answered. “All I have had to ask for has been done excellently by Signor Bonifazio.”

“I rejoice to hear it; for if it had not been so, I would have said to her, ‘Lucia, it is a shame, a wickedness, that you have not attended better to these foreigners that are so kind and so good.’ My second daughter L’Adelaide is betrothed to her eldest son; he wanted Elvira, but even at that time, when Gio-

vanni was in Russia, I could see that her heart——”

“Mamma, for pity’s sake,” broke in the sweet voice of Giovanni’s wife, the first words I had heard her speak. My attention had been fully occupied by the mother, while Helen had been equally busily engaged in extracting gentle monosyllables from Elvira.

The young wife looked very pretty and very shy, but there was somewhat of an air of sadness about her that troubled me. She had not that quiet look of repose which speaks of a heart at rest. Her large eyes looked anxious, and even careworn; and when she was not smiling, her face assumed a gravity unnatural in one so young. It brightened up prettily when Helen asked to see the baby, and she brought it into the room. It was a pretty, brown, Italian baby, with large soft eyes and abundance of dark hair; and Elvira evidently loved it with all the fervour of her southern nature.

“It is a little angel, a darling!” said the old Cavaliere, tenderly patting its little head. “And the Signor Conte, has he also little grandchildren? The English children are beautiful!”

I told him that my daughter Amy had two little ones—the youngest might be about the age of Elvira’s. Elvira looked pleased and interested, and I heard her begin to question Helen in a low voice about the English children.

Signora Celeste turned to me again—“It is curious,” she said, “but it is said that English children live upon milk. I suppose, then, that they are very small and thin, and have not much strength till they get older? Elvira would never have reared that child upon milk. But doubtless it is not true.”

I answered her that it was quite true.

“Indeed!” she said; “would you

believe it! And you mean to say that you never give them wine at all? What support can they have?"

I could only repeat that the children were very healthy and blooming. She evidently looked on my saying so as the ignorant assertion of a man.

It was some time before we could get away—there was so much to be said on Signora Mattei's part. Altogether, for a first visit, it was an unusually long one.

"Well, Helen, and what do you think of Giannetto's pretty wife?" I asked, as soon as we were seated in the carriage, and fairly started on our way home.

"Very pretty, very fascinating, but not clever, I should think; and, papa, did you notice how very sad she looks? I hope he is kind to her."

"She does indeed look sad, poor little thing! I was especially charmed with the old Cavaliere. What a thorough gentleman of the old school he is, with his white hair and his gentle venerable face!"

Before very long our visit was returned by the ladies of the party. We were sitting out on the terrace, —Helen putting the finishing touches to a drawing she had been making of a great bunch of yellow *nespoli*, or medlars; I myself lazily smoking, and reading a very stupid Italian novel,—when Beppo announced them. More chairs were brought out, and we reseated ourselves.

After a few moments of general conversation, Signora Celeste leant forward and said in a very loud whisper, "Signor Conte, with your leave, will you do me the great honour of permitting me a little conversation with you in private?"

I could see Elvira colour violently, and give an imploring look to her mother; but that good lady was not to be suppressed by looks. I could not imagine what she could want,

but politeness compelled me to bow, and lead the way into the house. She followed, sweeping along in a silk gown, which I could not help thinking made more rustle than any gown I had ever seen, or rather heard, before. I had an uncomfortable feeling that she was very close at my heels—a feeling increased by the sharp way in which she shut the door behind her with a click, and established herself on a tall old-fashioned arm-chair in front of me.

She began the conversation herself. "And now, Signor Conte," she said, "I shall be greatly obliged to you if you will have the kindness to tell me what you know of the former habits and pursuits of my son-in-law. It is not merely from curiosity that I ask," she added, seeing my natural hesitation; "but if the Signor Conte is able to tell me, it concerns me to know."

"It is, I fear, but little that I can tell you, Signora Mattei," I answered. "My acquaintance with Signor Giovanni was very slight, and of short duration. You are, he tells me, aware that his birth is not equal——"

"Yes, yes, I know that," she exclaimed. "He was but a peasant, a fisherman; is it not so?"

"You are right; and it was through a conversation with the priest of his village that I first became interested in him. He was very handsome, and—and I am an admirer of beauty. I was enabled to do him some slight service, which he makes too much of by far; and there our acquaintance for the time came to an end. It is an unexpected honour," I resumed, at my wits' end what to say, "that I have renewed it so advantageously."

Signora Celeste appeared to be thinking deeply, and not to remark my little speech, which was meant to be complimentary. She spoke again, with an abruptness which made me feel as if I was being

snapped at. "And this *Curato*, was he a friend of Giovanni's?"

"He was very good to him," I answered. "The father was dead, and the priest not only helped his mother with money out of his own very small store, but he also gave him an education which made him superior to his fellows."

"And his voice? Did the priest also teach him to sing?"

"His voice, his voice," I stammered; "it developed late in life—unusually late. No; the priest had nothing to do with training that."

"Then he never sang in the choir?" she asked.

"Not to my knowledge," I replied, wishing her anywhere—at the bottom of the Red Sea.

"And is his mother alive?"

"She is—that is, I believe so; but it is so long since I have been at San Jacopo, that the Signora will comprehend that I can give no exact answer to her question."

Signora Celeste suddenly rose, drew her chair closer to mine, and folding her hands (clothed in black net mittens) together, she fixed her eyes upon me, and proceeded: "Signor Conte, I am afraid you have indeed but little to tell me: but I will explain to you the reason of my question; for, without doubt, you consider me indiscreet and impertinent—nay, it is but natural that I should so appear to you."

Of course I endeavoured to disavow the supposition; but she interrupted my attempted civilities ruthlessly. "Listen, Signor," she said—"listen. Giovanni has no doubt told you that he came first under my husband's notice as a copyist who was working out his musical education at Milan. At that time we resided much at Milan. My mother was alive, and a great invalid; so we spent months with her at a time. My

husband had not then obtained his present appointment at Florence. The Signor Conte knows that the Cavaliere is a great *diletante*, has a veritable passion for music; and where there is a music-seller's shop, there he is to be found, at times, for hours in the day. Well, he had at that time a fanaticism for very ancient music, forgotten altogether at this present time, and much of this he had transposed for the violin. It is difficult, this old music, and has to be understood, or the transposing makes it often almost ludicrous. My husband found that Giovanni could do it well, and employed him constantly. The poor boy was at that time so destitute, that I could see that very often he had not enough to buy a good meal; so it ended in our taking him into the house.

"My mother, poor soul, took a great fancy for Giovanni, and would have it that he was to be one of the greatest singers of the day; and it is certain that his voice was of a beauty, a quality, that one does not meet with often.

"The only times he would never spend with us were his Sundays and his saints' days. On such days, when friends and neighbours meet, going and coming from the churches, he would never consent to be with our family party. At first, when I asked him, he would not say where he went, but latterly he walked into the country to see some old friend of his mother's, who was a Milanese; so I remained satisfied. The Signora knows, I presume, that he obtained an engagement of much distinction, and left us for Russia. By that time we had become so fond of him that it was a sorrow, a grief, to part from him; and it was to us like the return of a dear son when he came home and asked the Cavaliere for Elvira.

"Elvira was not without suitors—several times I could have established her well in life; but the poor child had a veritable little passion for Giovanni—and the Signor Conte can understand the feelings of a father. What could he do? He consented. The day for the wedding was fixed; but instead of looking happy, the bridegroom looked gloomier every day, and Elvira did nothing but cry. We could not imagine what was amiss. At last I compelled Elvira to tell me—Giovanni wished for a civil marriage without the blessing of the Church. Of course Elvira would not agree; and the Cavaliere was very angry, and wished at the eleventh hour to stop it all. They are all alike, these men, with their impatience! I told Elvira that I took it on myself. I sent for Giovanni. I asked him if he could give a clear and sufficient reason for his wish; and he had nothing to say except that he disliked the ceremony, and other such frivolous pretexts, worthy of no consideration. I told him so. I asked him to talk it over with some priest; but that he refused to do: and after a few more expostulations, he gave way. Signor Conte, there is something, I know not what, of mysterious about him. When the moment came that the wedding procession should enter the church, he became pale as a corpse, the perspiration stood on his brow, he seemed as if in a mortal agony, and so it continued during the ceremony; and when he had to speak, it seemed to us all that his voice was gone—he mumbled his answers as if he knew not what he said; and at last, when all was over, he had to be supported out of the church more like a dead than a living man. Ah! we were much frightened; but the outer air seemed to revive him, and he became himself again. It was strange, un-

accountable, was it not? I myself cannot understand it—for I never saw a malady at all resembling it; and, as a rule, his health is excellent—he knows not what it is to be ill.

"Now, alas!" she continued, "we find that Giovanni never enters the door of a church; he has never once confessed since his marriage, never says a prayer, and will not even use holy words, or sing songs addressed to divine personages. Alas! it is this that makes my poor child so unhappy. He is very kind, kindness itself to her, except on this one subject—and on this he will hear nothing; and she, poor child, has always been a good Christian—a saint, I may say, in all her ways. He cannot even endure the sight of her crucifix, her little images, and sacred pictures; so she grieves much. In short, where the holy faith is concerned, and there only, he is utterly unlike his better self.

"When the child was born, she had hoped to dedicate it to the blessed Mother, and call it Maria; but he would not have it so named, and had it baptised Felicità—a name of good omen, he said. There is a small saint of the name, a Santa Stravagante, without a fixed day in the calendar, which made us give our consent. But, Signore," she continued, rising, "I have trespassed long upon your time. I had hoped," she added, sadly, "that you would have been able to help us—to tell us something that would account for this strange evil in Giovanni; but I see that you can tell me no more than we know ourselves. A thousand thanks for the kind interest you have shown in what I have ventured to tell you; and I must beg many pardons for having thus taken up your time."

While this conversation was going on, Helen had been growing

much interested in her companion, whom she found more intelligent than she had expected.

Elvira told her a good deal about their life in Russia, and Russian ways and customs. She spoke of her husband's success with much pride, and detailed many of the compliments and favours showered on him at St Petersburg. Helen was amused, and thought the time had passed only too quickly when Signora Mattei returned; and they took their leave with the usual compliments.

To myself, the time had not seemed so short. The whole conversation had been painful to me, from the consciousness of having something to conceal. I told Helen what had passed. She grieved for

the poor little wife. "I am sure she feels it dreadfully," she said. "She looks to me as if she had cried till she could cry no more—and no wonder! But it seems to me curious that she should not have thought of all this before she married him." "I thought so at first," I answered; "but consider, these Italian women know little or nothing of the men they are destined to marry, and are never by any chance allowed to hold conversation with them alone; so that I do not think it so wonderful. Besides, in this case the only thing she had had to startle her was his wish to have a civil marriage only; and that point, we know, he yielded." Helen sighed, "Poor little thing! poor Elvira!"

CHAPTER VI.

Giannetto and his wife called on us once more, when unfortunately we were out, leaving highly-glazed cards, after the Italian fashion, with P.P.C. in the corner. They went on to Venice, where he had accepted an engagement.

The Italian spring set in, and the cold weather passed away. Florence, as the year advanced, began to justify her beautiful flowery name: tall tulips, crimson and white and yellow, countless purple and scarlet anemones, turned the olive and vine yards into carpets of wonderful brilliancy; the scent of orange and lemon blossoms in the garden became almost overpowering; and large magnolias slowly unfolded their wax-like leaves.

We used to return from our long drives in the cool of the evening, the carriage laden with flowers; at one time with irises, tulips, and roses—at another with myrtle and sweet-bay, and long branches of the purple Judas-tree, and orange-flowing arbutus. Helen revelled in

them; and would turn our large cool drawing-room into a perfect bower, much to the disgust of Bepo and some other of the Italian servants, who, like all their countrymen, dread sweet-scented flowers indoors, believing that they produce fevers and all sorts of harm.

We grudged every week as it passed; and the heat increased, warning us that the season was at hand in which Italy chooses to be left in peace with her children, and the foreigner must fly.

One evening we accomplished an expedition we had had in view for a long time—a drive to the top of Fiesole, to visit the Franciscan monastery.

The glare of the day was quite over, for the heat was very great when we started, and the ascent was slow in consequence. Up we toiled along the broad white road on its zigzag course, meeting few people by the way—now passing a group of peasants with their large white-haired dog or sprightly spitz,

now being passed by a carriage making a spurt up the hill, containing two or three Russian ladies and gentlemen, on their way probably to dine at Villa Mozzi; then, as we rose higher, the Fiesole women crowded round us, begging us to buy their straw-plait work, long rolls of it beautifully twisted—and queer straw cocks and hens with long tails. Helen was very weak-minded, and bought right and left.

We reached the old Etruscan town, with its lovely church-tower, and watched a line of seminarists in their long black cassocks pass us and descend the hill from their home, diminishing in size as the distance increased, till it appeared like the twisting of a small black serpent far below.

We had brought some large heavy packages of coffee, sugar, and snuff, as a present to the friars; and bidding Beppo follow with these, we took our way to the monastery.

We were received with a warm welcome by the Father Superior, who told us that it was a great treat to them to receive visitors, and was most attentive to us,—showed us the chapel, and the various points from which the magnificent view was best to be seen, and even allowed Helen to peep into the *clausura*—the inner cloister, where no woman may tread.

He told us that most of his friars were absent on their special missions, and at that time not more than twelve in all were at home. "One of them," he said, "has just returned from our mother home at Assisi. The cholera was at Perugia, and a great panic prevailed, especially as two of the brethren had died, and they sent for some from here, to bring fresh hands to the work. They asked for a good preacher, and I sent our best—Fra Geronimo, and a young brother, full of zeal, who had lately joined, Fra Martino. Alas! Fra Geronimo

returned alone; the young brother had finished his work, and obtained his crown of martyrdom. He is doubly blessed, having been buried near the shrine of the holy Francis himself; but he was very young."

"Fra Geronimo!" I repeated. "Was it he who was at Nice some five or six years ago, preaching in the church of Santa Lucia?"

"It is possible; I cannot tell," was the answer of the Superior. "Our friars go far and wide. Yes, assuredly he has been at Nice often; but when, I cannot tell. Perhaps the Vossignoria might like to ask him?"

"I should, very much," I replied eagerly.

The Superior beckoned to a lay brother, a pale, bowed-down-looking man—"Où, Gian-Maria, when the Padre Geronimo enters, pray him to come to me."

Meanwhile Helen had taken out her drawing-book, and was sketching rapidly, seated on a little rough step, a group of friars in their picturesque brown habit gathered round her, making their remarks aloud—"Look! look! there is old Pietro's cottage; how natural it is! What a wonderful talent! And there is old Mariuccio in her red apron! what a marvel! And a woman can do thus! Verily, who would believe it? Look! look! there is the black cat. Santa Maria! but it is wonderful!"

"The Signora is English?" asked one, rather timidly. "She is doubtless an artist?"

Helen told him that many English women sketched very well, entirely for their own pleasure.

"Indeed! truly it is wonderful! Who would have thought that women could thus?" they repeated, much to her amusement.

Here the Superior offered her a pinch of snuff; and knowing that a refusal would hurt the kindly feelings of the fathers, she took it,

and submitted to the frightful fit of sneezing which was the natural consequence—the friars all saluting her, and wishing her *buona salute* and *felicità*, as she did so, after their courteous, old-fashioned custom.

They then begged her acceptance of various little treasures made of wax, manufactured by themselves, chiefly long coils for lighting candles, twisted in all sorts of fantastic shapes. Helen professed great admiration for them, much to their delight; and she promised to take some home to her little nieces, her sister's children. On hearing this, one of the monks quickly retreated into the monastery, and returned with a little paper parcel. "See, Signora!" he cried, "I have brought you something for the little children—see!" and, with a flourish, he drew a wax bird from the paper, and triumphantly presented it. "See! it has eyes, black eyes, and can move its wings; but you will be very careful of it!"

Helen accepted the treasure with as much pleasure as it was given, and put it very carefully into her drawing-bag. Presently she rose and came up to show me her sketch. While doing so, she suddenly caught hold of me—"Look, look, papa! what a picture!"

What so much attracted her attention was the appearance of two Franciscan monks slowly mounting the hill, in the taller of whom I at once recognised the Fra Geronimo who had so much excited our admiration by his preaching at Nice.

They formed, as she said, a very picturesque group. Fra Geronimo walked with a long and firm step, his noble head erect, and the fine proportions of his tall attenuated figure undisguised by his rough brown habit. His companion was a much older man, but appeared to be bowed by infirmity and care even more than by the weight of years.

He walked with his eyes fixed on the ground, and his long grey beard reached down to the hempen cord which formed his girdle. Each carried a sack over his left shoulder, containing the gifts of charity that day received for the convent.

They parted at the foot of the chapel steps, the older Father going on to the cloister—the other, Fra Geronimo, obeying a sign from his Superior, and advancing to where we stood.

"Have you had good speed, brother Geronimo?" was the first question.

"We have walked far," he answered, "and Fra Pietro is very weary; few asked him to rest in their houses. There is little charity abroad."

The Superior looked rather wistfully at the sack, and did not answer. Fra Geronimo turned to me, and saluted me gravely.

There was a certain sternness and severity about the man. He gave me the impression of being uncompromising in everything—a face of singular power, of one who would grapple with sin in mid-career, and force shame and remorse on the most hardened sinner.

I asked him whether he recollected having been at Nice the year that we were there? He remembered it well; he had been there for some months, preaching a great deal. A sudden idea struck me. I would tell Giannetto's whole history to this man, and ask him what he thought of it. The tall friar was standing before me, calm and motionless, waiting for me to speak. Should I do harm in trusting him? I knew nothing of him. I raised my eyes, and scrutinised his face with care. As if conscious that much depended on that look, he bent his large hollow eyes on me for one moment; but in that moment all hesitation passed away, and I felt that the man who stood

before me was indeed a fit instrument for God's will—pure in single-mindedness, strong as steel; and I determined to trust him implicitly.

It was now growing late, and knowing that I should scarcely have time for my long story then, I begged Fra Geronimo (if it should be possible) to visit me at the villa within a few days, as I had occasion to ask his advice. He told me that he would do so; and, calling Helen, we took leave of our kind hosts, and started on our return home.

Merrily the horses trotted down, swinging the carriage round the zig-zag corners, the sharp drag making the seats vibrate as we went. A few fire-flies were dancing about (though it was still early in the year for them), and now and then a glimmering spark from the ground revealed a glow-worm, almost emerald in its green light. Helen had a fancy that the glow-worms were the wives of the fire-flies, and insisted that it was true, and that the fire-flies were ill-conditioned, wild gallants, who left their estimable wives to mope at home by themselves. The grasshoppers made such a noise that, at one time, we could not help fancying that one must have got into the carriage.

We seemed to reach home only too soon—too soon, indeed, in sad earnest; for on the table lay a packet of letters, sent by express—a summons home on important business. Alas! how the few business-like explanatory words of my correspondent brought us down from the world of fire-flies and romance to the dull routine of everyday life! Our happy holiday was at an end. Helen went up-stairs in a very disconsolate humour, and, some time after, confessed to me that she had cried herself to sleep.

During the few days that followed, we had so much to arrange and to think of, that I had almost forgotten my appointment with the

Franciscan. The letters arrived on Friday, and the following Tuesday was the day fixed upon for our departure. On Monday evening our arrangements were completed, and we had time to sit down and rest, and look ruefully round our dismantled rooms. All the purchases we had made at Florence, which had served to beautify our pleasant villa, had been removed that afternoon, to be packed in Florence and sent off to England. There were two or three fine old gilded *cassoni* or chests, carved chairs, large majolica pots, innumerable odds and ends, and, the greatest treasure of all, an exquisite little David, by Donatello, under a white marble baldacchino, standing about two feet high,—all were gone!—nothing but the original bare furniture remained. No wonder that we felt disconsolate.

It was beginning to grow rather late, when Beppo came in to say that a Franciscan wished to speak with me. I was very glad, having greatly feared that I should not see him again. He came in, and apologised for not having been able to come before.

"I have had much to do," he said. "Much preaching also has fallen to my lot; and, alas! the flesh is weak. After preaching, I am often unable to do more."

He seated himself, enveloping his hands in the loose sleeves of his habit, and bending his eyes to the ground. Helen had left the room, feeling that it might be easier for the friar to talk to me in her absence.

I began at once by telling him how and in what manner I had come across the village of San Jacopo, and had first been interested in the unhappy Giannetto. I told him of our coming to Nice together, and of the impression made on us all by his sermon on human suffering; of the verdict of the doctors,

—in short, all the whole strange story. He remembered the storm well, and had had much to do in helping and consoling the sufferers from the effects of it. When I told him of Giannetto's return, and the wonderful change wrought in him, he crossed himself repeatedly, and muttered something in Latin, too low for me to hear; and he could scarcely conceal his astonishment under the usual perfect calm of his demeanour when I told him that this young fisherman, whose history I had been telling him, was no other than the famous tenor Giovanni, who had lately been making such a sensation in Florence.

"And now, Father," I concluded, "tell me what you think of this strange story. Is there, can there be any unnatural, or rather unhal- lowed, cause which has driven Giannetto from Church and God?"

"I know not," replied the friar; "strange and unaccountable things sometimes occur in nature. Signor Conte"—he lowered his voice almost to a whisper—"sometimes desperate men have been known to sell their souls."

It was evident that his suspicions pointed in the same direction as my own.

"Anyhow," he exclaimed, "there is a soul to be saved for God. I will, God give me grace, do my part. For yours, pray for me. God will give me the power, if it be His sacred will."

His large eyes flashed with a feverish, enthusiastic fire; and as he rose to his feet, and drew the hempen girdle round his loins, he looked like some prophet about to go forth inspired on his way.

"You go?" I asked, somehow

feeling scarcely worthy to address him.

"I go to Venice. I follow him through the world. There is a soul to be saved for God."

Awe-struck, I stood aside to let him pass; and he went straight out, only pausing on the threshold and raising his hand in the act of blessing. I watched him till a turn in the road hid him from my sight, and then, lost in thought and bewildered, returned into the house.

The next morning dawned, the day of our departure. Helen came down to breakfast in her travelling dress, and we both felt very sad. The carriage was announced, and we went out to it. All our cottage-friends were assembled under the long, broad portico: Pippo, the gardener, with an enormous stiff bouquet for Helen; Adele, his wife; Colomba, the wife of the *contadino*, who managed the vines and *podere*, or farm; and all the children, also holding bouquets; Carola, Anna, and the old father, the patriarch of them all; and last, but not least, the villa watch-dogs, Giotto and Solferino.

It was a mingled scene of crying and kissing of hands, and shouts of "A pleasant journey, a most happy journey!" &c. We got away at last, and I thought our partings well over; but at the station, as I slipped a last *scudo* into the coachman's hand, to my dismay he clasped mine to his lips, and burst into tears.

We were seated in the carriage, the train began to move, when a shower of bouquets was thrown in at the window, and a shrill voice shouted a last *buon viaggio*. It was Signora Celeste herself, who stood gesticulating on the platform as we steamed out of the station.

(To be continued.)

IDAS; OR, ANTICHRISTUS BRITANNICUS,

Inter Pocula.

AN EXTRAVAGANZA, BY JOHANNES BOUSTROPHEDONIDES,

Solutus Aratro.

Τὸν δ' ἕρ' ὑποφρασθεὶς μεγάλην ὄπλιν νεύκεσεν Ἰδας· κ.τ.λ.

—*Apoll. Rhod.*, i. 462 seq.

PROLEGOMENA.

IN days gone by, the frogs, weary of the mild sovereignty under which they lived, petitioned Zeus that he would give them a King; and he flung them down an inanimate Log to be their new governor. They worshipped it for a time in distant reverence; but it was not long before they learned to condemn and mock at the impotence of the dull mass of matter,—and we all know the retribution that followed. Will the reign of Materialism, now apparently installed in the high places of thought, enjoy a longer tenure of observance, or escape a similar deposition? And are we not in danger of undergoing a corresponding chastisement through our growing impatience of legitimate control, and the sacrifices we are daily making of the most sacred bequests of the past to the devouring Moloch of change?

The predominant feature of thought in the present day is an almost fanatical Scepticism in Theology, Philosophy, Politics, and in some departments of Science, the tendency of which is to enthrone Matter, that is, brute force, as the regent, or rather the final cause, of creation, to the blotting out of God, and the rejection of Revelation. The broad line drawn by the wisest philosophers from Socrates to Bacon between the twin worlds of Law and Liberty, Sense and Spirit,

Nature and Miracle, Knowledge and Faith—each of these worlds existing independently of the other, while the conditions under which their respective truths become cognisable by man are radically distinct—has been utterly lost sight of; and thus it comes to pass that crude and indigested theories, based upon data belonging exclusively to one or the other of the two worlds in question, and almost invariably of the Materialistic type, are set forth to the popular apprehension as the key to the enigma of being by some of our ablest pioneers in science, in utter disregard of the inferences that must logically be drawn from such partial presentments, and of the shock to religion and morality which invariably ensues under such conditions. No one can deny the genius of these men, or dispute the value of their discoveries in physics: their misfortune is, that they know not where to stop; and their fault, that, shutting their ears to the warnings of the great teachers above mentioned, they restrict existence to the sphere comprehended by their finite intelligence, and repudiate the World of Faith altogether, with all its independent yet congenial claims upon mankind. From that moment—and it is the experience of all ages and in every branch of human thought and activity—error sets in, with its disastrous consequences alike to

scientific inquiry and public morality: Spirit is subordinated to Sense, Deity to Humanity; one-eyed Doubt, the "wit oblique" of the poet, disturbs and blinds us to that "steady light" sent down from heaven by which we are enabled to contemplate Truth as she is: the sanctions of morality are thus subverted; and the body corporate of Society breaks up in rottenness, and crawls away limb by limb. Meanwhile the intellectual march of the champions of Materialism is like that of the Titan race of old,—

"Audax omnia perpeti,
Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas;

Cælum ipsum petimus stultitiâ;"

while their exemption from the "iracunda Jovis . . . fulmina" is best pleaded for in the words applied to the Jews by one wiser than Socrates—"They know not what they do." It is the depravation of social and political morals consequent upon the Materialistic theory, thus developed far beyond the contemplation of its modern sponsors—the wildest excesses springing generically from the confounding of things essentially distinct which that theory is grounded upon—that we have to deal with in the ensuing pages.

IDAS has himself sufficiently discriminated between the ultimate tendency of the doctrines he advocates and the unconscious agency of the men whom he boasts of as coadjutors in his work. He claims them, it will be observed, as dupes, ~~and~~ making use of them as tools. Accepting the imaginary IDAS as the incarnation of the pseudo-philosophy now once more in vogue, the claim must be regarded as just; and it therefore becomes the duty of Society not only in the first instance to denounce a system of teaching which tends to subvert

her very foundations, but, further, to warn her members against the influence of those who take the lead, many of them (I repeat) in blind unconsciousness, in what has become an avowed crusade against her.

Except from the basis of a sound and comprehensive philosophy, inclusive, like that of Socrates and of Bacon (as that great man contemplated it), of both worlds of thought and action, it is impossible to contend effectively against either Idealism or Materialism; and such a philosophy has been long out of date. Nor would such high argument touch the popular apprehension; and now that the school-master is abroad, the masses are more than ever exposed to every breath of empty doctrine. The only really effective means, therefore, towards opening the eyes of the million, is to exhibit the tendencies of such theories as are now in question in their extreme issues; and for this good service the Muse has been the accredited agent in all ages, from the days of Aristophanes to those of Canning. A shower-bath of practical common-sense is the best prescription for clearing away cobwebs and expelling illusions from the popular brain, when blown up with vain conceits, and disinclined to walk in the old paths of sobriety, as at the present time. The world is—with only just such isolated exceptions as prove the rule—wiser than any one man, or any clique of men; and will not for ever tolerate doctrines which, however specious in the germ, lead directly towards the dissolution of those constitutional bonds which link man together with man, and mankind with God,—substituting, in effect, licence for order, and vice for virtue, as the law of our being. Experience is the great test of theory. Every

aberration from central and constitutional truth, originating in exclusive devotion either to the world of Sense or that of Spirit, has hitherto landed its votaries in the mire. The present will be no exception to the rule.

That irreparable mischief may be done to our national institutions by legislation under the pressure of mere numbers, always liable to delusion or passion, is most certain, and the evil has already made itself felt; but in regard to the broader interests of thought and of the human race as children of Heaven, I entertain no despondency. The Spirit of God that once moved upon the waters—the “*vis medicatrix nature*” in its highest sense—a force more potent than that either of Materialism or Idealism—promotive always of virtue and truth, and restorative of harmony when the sweet bells of humanity have been jangled out of tune—invariably intervenes to propel us back into the right path, after such extravagances as those now protested against have run their course.

A word or two may be added with reference to some obscure allusions in the following poem.

The IDAS of ancient song was a brother of Lynceus and son of Aphaeus—characters, all of them, of mythology, not history. While Lynceus was the keenest-sighted of mortals, Idas was obtuse, voracious, dogged, and insolent—confident in himself, contemptuous of dignities and of the Gods. During the feast of the Argonauts on the shore below Iolcos, the evening before they started in quest of the Golden Fleece, Jason had fallen into thought, pondering anxiously on the responsibilities he had undertaken; when Idas broke out with reproachful words, taunting him with cowardice: “Fear not!” he

exclaimed; “by this spear I swear—which helps me far more than Zeus in battle—our adventure shall be successful, even though God himself strive against us!” Long afterwards, in the war with the Dioscuri, Castor and Polydeuces (or Pollux), sons of Zeus and “God’s Saviours,” Idas slew the mortal Castor with his spear, and stunned (but of course could not kill) the immortal Polydeuces by a vast stone, a pillar torn from his father’s tomb—whereupon Zeus terminated his intrepid career by striking him dead with a thunderbolt.

The God CONSENSUS was the ‘*Nep-tunus Equestris*’ of the Romans; whom the Stoics (more particularly) viewed as the Spirit or Breath of Intelligence shed abroad on the waters; while Maximus Tyrius extends his influence over the sea and earth alike, as regulating and maintaining their equilibrium. In a more limited sense the Romans qualified Consus as the God of Secret Counsels. His altar was situated in a sharp angle projecting beyond the Pomœrium, outside of Roma Quadrata, towards the Vallis Murcia, afterwards the Circus Maximus; or, according to others, lay near the goal of the Circus, and close under the Palatine Hill. It was kept covered with earth throughout the year, except at the festival of the Consualia. It was first disinterred, according to the Roman tradition, by Romulus. The writer has no authority for addressing him as God of Geese; but he came to the conclusion some time ago, from a variety of concurrent circumstances, that the goose was his symbol, and even that the sacred geese of the Capitol were originally kept there in his honour.

The bird alluded to as accompanying the ship Argo was a dove sent by Athena to conduct the Argonauts between the Symple-

gades,—vast rocks floating at the entrance from the Bosphorus into the Euxine, and which alternately clashed against each other and recoiled. Every vessel which had hitherto attempted to pass through during the period of recoil had been ground to powder. The dove was intrusted to Euphemus, one of the heroes, with orders to loose her at the proper moment and watch her flight; if she emerged from between the rocks, they should follow; if not, the adventure was not for them, and they should return. The bird passed safely through, although losing some feathers from her tail; and Argo passed with the like success, the clashing rocks merely depriving her of the top of her ἀφλαστρον, an ornamental appendage to

her stern. The Symplegades remained henceforth fixed and harmless for ever.

The EPILOGUE is founded on the custom of the γεφυρισμός, or 'chaffing' showered upon the 'Epoptæ,' or newly initiated, on their return home, by those standing on the bridge over the Cephissus, which separated the sacred soil of Eleusis from the hardly less sacred soil of 'Attica.' The 'chaff' was liberally responded to by the 'Epoptæ'—in the reaction to levity which constantly follows upon religious excitement—'epoptæ,' indeed, less tongue-tied than those of Idas.

I think I may now close these preliminary, perhaps superfluous, observations.

FLORENCE, November 1874.

PROLOGUE

Hail, Consus, God of Geese! Not without warrant

Did the old Romans honour thee—thy march

Straight to the point, of all by-paths abhorrent

Right hand and left, through the triumphal arch

Of Purpose, to the Capitol—each torrent

Of popular impulse stemming; stubborn, starch,

Stupid, obstructive,—caring not a pin

So thou couldst stablish truth, and empire win.

What is thy lesson? Wisdom's pathway lies

'Twixt Law and Liberty; the Constitution

Weds them, and bridles,—he that casts goat's eyes

At one or t'other fathers Revolution:—

Order consists but in their compromise,—

Divorce them—'tis a crime past absolution!

'Tis but in following Consus, silly geese,

Like us, can 'scape the fell Symplegades.

There sits a little bird and sings aloft,

Perch'd on our British Argo's central mast;

And they that will not heed that tender, soft,

Inspiring strain, will come to grief at last:—

That bird is Christ's—he cares for us,—if, scoff'd,

The bird takes wing, then Britain's hope is past:—

Idas may mock, but poor Jack loves his song,

And hates the miscreant who would do him wrong.

This Idas is the scoffer 'mongst our crew—

A frog unclean, that croaks at all John Bull
Holds sacred,—fire from heav'n his namesake slew ;

His own explosive windy belly-full
Will for our batrach the like office do !

Altars and thrones he fretteth to down-pull
In hate like Cain's, obdurately persistent :—
But what shall the Muse say to those whose distant

Orbits revolve round his ? That they have miss'd,

Like wand'ring stars, their courses ? That they know
The port they drive at ? That they've loosely kiss'd

Sin, and enjoy the morsel ? Nay, not so :—
But rather, " You've mistaken chaff for grist,

False Gods for true ! Like parrots in a row,
You've learnt the prate that Doubt is Wisdom's tooth,—
Unlearn it !—and you yet may feed on Truth."

Now, gentle reader ! do not, pray, suppose,

Because I point "*ex sociis hominem*"
At certain errant knights, whom by the nose

Duessa leads, I charge her guilt on them !
Solon in blinkers knows not where he goes :—

'Tis wilful Error moves Thalia's phlegm.

Au reste—'tis Idas trots them out, not I, no !

Hear him ! mark, learn—there's "*veritas in vino* !"

ANTICHRISTUS, &c.

(*At the 'Pauperam tabernas.'—Αντροπλα.*)

I'm IDAS ! I'm the Iconoclast !

Whom timorous fools the Atheist call ;

Before my nostrils' scathing blast

Faiths, Charters, Constitutions fall !

My gospel heralds a new world,

A paradise for working men,—

All powers from earth's high places hurl'd,

And Saturn's Golden Age again.

I'm the ideal working man ;

I care for nought and nobody,—

Model the world upon my plan,

Or else you're not the lads for me !

No judge, no priest, no lord, no king—

Nations submissive to my nod—

The lion's share in everything—

On earth no law, in heaven no God.

My creed is simple. All proceeds

From Matter and to Matter tends ;

Man's appetite's a wolf ; our deeds
 Are worthy as they serve its ends :—
 Life's nothing if not gratified ;
 All stands by individual might ;
 The stronger shoves the weak aside,
 And what he wills and does is right.

Order and Peace are empty names,—
 Let each man fight for food and fire !
 Marriage sets up exclusive claims
 To common food for man's desire ;
 Schooling breeds up rebellious sons,
 Would wiser than their fathers be,—
 Better my boy should be a dunce,
 Or, better still, no son to me.

Let men and women herd at will,—
 'Twas so when we were apes of yore ;
 Superfluous brats 'twere well to kill,
 Or you may find their wants a bore,—
 They do't in China :—like the Turk,
 When worn out strangle their mammas ;
 And if they live and cannot work,
 Eat, like the Battas, your papas !

Down with the rich—we'll all be rich !
 Down with the noble—all are peers !
 Down with all false opinions, which
 Affront our pride, or wake our fears !
 Down with the weak, the privileg'd !
 To you, the young, the brute, the strong,
 My gospel promises are pledg'd,—
 To you life's sweets of right belong.

No capitalist henceforward save
 The Publican shall own a rap ;
 To brew for us our common slave,
 And make us cozy at the tap ;
 But all beyond the cost shall be
 Divided 'mong the master sex ;
 And woe betide the knave if he
 Draw it less strong than X X X !

One hireling, too, shall still survive—
 The Doctor ; casual wounds to dress,
 And check disease, that we may live
 Fearless of injury from excess.
 Grudge not *his* fee ! with bated breath
 Cap him i' the street,—tush, tush ! 'tis folly
 To dream of . . . something after death !
 There's nothing.—Pass the jug—be jolly !

Credit not what the parsons preach ;
 I know, I know there is no God ;
 Our span of being doth not reach
 Beyond its starting-point, the clod :
 Or, grant there be a judgment-day,
 We are the sheep and they the goats ;
 They're paid, poor beggars ! Doubtless they
 Believe as we—*don't* cut their throats !

Fear not our rulers ! They're a band
 Of cowards, impotent for war ;
 One spark of pluck, the law's strong hand
 Would crush us, like the rats we are,—
 Ay, rats ! there is no shrewder beast !
 But since the Whigs unseal'd our eyes,
 Shirking St George's-in-the-East,
 We know their terrors, and despise.

There's an old Book the story tells
 Of One the so-call'd Devil withstood,
 Heal'd broken hearts, work'd miracles,
 And died to save us by His blood ;
 But Pyrrho, Timon, and their crew
 Have disabus'd us of such stuff ;
 Old things are perish'd, all things new—
 Eat, drink, and—*verbum sap.* 's enough !

It says the man that in his heart
 Saith there's no God is stamp'd a fool ;
 That those who choose the better part,
 And serve with Christ, with Christ shall rule :—
 Vain hope ! false tale ! devis'd to blind
 Our sires and breed obedient youth,—
 Mine's the new Advent for mankind—
 I'm the Hierophant of Truth !

Ye are my chosen friends, who know
 My inmost soul ; the mass of men,
 E'en British workmen, are not so,—
 As yet they're sucklings ; but to train
 Their budding minds I've men of mould,
 Charter'd respectabilities,
 Who'd smile derisive were they told
 They're my poor cousins ! and, 'mong these,

First-rate decoy-ducks ; some in Art,
 In Letters more, in Science most ;
 Whose teaching's mine, if not their heart,—
 As Hylax, in himself a host ;

Spurcus, my poet ; Herus too,
 My new Arcadia's Philip Sidney ;
 Strong-minded women not a few,
 And critics of the Zulu kidney.

* * * * *

Mine too the Stentors hoarse that stun
 Our ears with fierce denunciation
 Of all who scout their scheme of Un-
 secta—no, Secular Education ;
 The old cant echoing, " Power resides
 In "—Wisdom ? nay, forsooth—" in Knowledge !"
 —Thanks to the maxim that provides
 Such touters for my Training College !

" Let God," they say, " His own look after,
 We after Cæsar's ! Adam Smith,
 Sic vult, sic jubet : "—Food for laughter
 To us, whose int'rests jump therewith !
 I smile, and cheer, and trump their text :—
 By metaphysic vivisection
 Spirit and Flesh they part,—what next ?
 'Tis ours betwixt to make election.

* * * * *

I love to hear these sceptics talk,
 I love to see the pranks they play,
 To watch them stumbling as they walk
 Through deep'ning night in quest of day :—
 They grope, nor find,—they've flung aside
 Their early faith ; but, one by one,
 They'll see and shudder—me their guide—
 When Sense stalks naked in the sun !

Then follow, follow, follow me,
 Great Ignis Fatuus of the age,
 Prophet of unzon'd Liberty,
 Turner of Time's exhausted page
 I lead you on a path sublime—
 My cry, my gathering-word is this,—
 Restraint alone is henceforth crime,
 And Lawlessness alone is bliss !

Hurrah ! the blood-red banner streams—
 The old sun sets, the new arises !
 All sanctions of the past are dreams—
 All rags of virtue mere disguises :—
 Hurrah for Vice, for Change, for Chance !
 There is no Hell—let life be free !
 —I've piped, and now, ye blackguards, dance !
 But kneel down first, and worship—ME !

EPILOGUE.

(Ad Cephissi Pontem-Submarinum ; adhuc, imperpetuum sit ! in nubibus.)

CHORUS OF GEPHYRISTÆ.

Through this tunnel— Fraternal funnel
 For the good things transmitting
 Of England to France— The Epopts must advance ;
 And we, as of custom befitting,

Must assail them with battle Of banter and rattle ;
 For none may refuse his
 Due share of jobation After initiation
 In the shows of the British Eleusis.

EPOPTÆ (*approaching*).

Kk, kack, whack, quack, koäx, wax !

GEPHYRISTÆ.

We are French Communists, God-haters, humanists,
 Comtists, and what not ;
 And we own none as kin Whom the Father of Sin
 On the goddess of Reason's begot not.

So now for fraternity ! But, Time and Eternity !
 How they come tumble topsy
 And turvy along, With their Bacchanal song,
 From their happy and nappy Epopsy !

EPOPTÆ (*nearer*).

Hiccupedickupe, konxompax,
 Idas, sing Idas ; and stick like wax !

GEPHYRISTÆ.

Good evening, fair brothers ! ' Methinks it, your feathers,
 Are woefully ruff'd ;
 And every man's eye— I should like to know why ?
 Is in bandages mournfully muff'd !

EPOPTÆ (*in presence*).

Brekekekex, koäx, koäx !
 Hiccupedickupe, konxompax !
 Idas, sing Idas ; and stick like wax !

GEPHYRISTÆ.

Come open your heart ! You'll have much to impart—
 Though your rig's but a rum one !
 Of Satyric experience To us, your Hyperions,
 Of the Cosmopolitan Commune !
 What deeper rascality— In potentiality—
 You've learnt from the teaching
 Of Citizen Idas,— No better guide asses
 like you for suitably teaching !

EPOPTÆ.

Brekekekex, koäx, koäx !
 Hiccupedickupe, konxompax !
 Idas, sing Idas ; and stick like wax !

GEPHYRISTÆ.

What, dumb every one of you ? Each mother's son of you ?
 Won't you be civil ?
 Then, gobblers and guzzlers, Beer-barrel muzzlers,
 Go to pot, with your swine-herd, the Devil !
 But, *en passant*, just listen To my admonition ;
 You've mistaken your trade !
 Who deals in deep potions Owns human emotions—
 Not of such is the Communist made !

EPOPTÆ.

Brekekekex, koäx, koäx !
 Hiccupedickupe, konxompax !
 Idas, sing Idas ; and stick like wax !

GEPHYRISTÆ.

Not of soft paste ; But sober, even chaste,
 Cold and hard as a Roman,
 Remorseless and cruel, Like me—he's the jewel
 For the brow of Our Lady, the Commune !
 Butchers and bakers ! Dung your fat acres—
 Hatch eggs for your hens !
 Tailors and weavers ! They're arrant deceivers,
 Would persuade you your calling is—men's !

EPOPTÆ.

Brekekekex, koäx, koäx !
 Hiccupedickupe, konxompax !
 Idas, sing Idas ; and stick like wax !

GEPHYRISTÆ.

'Tis not for John Bull In the same boat to pull
 With the gay sons of France ;
 Nor to flourish his legs Among heads—I mean, eggs—
 In the merry-go “Ça-ira” dance !

Such as you'll never dish up A martyr'd Archbishop
 At Antichrist's table ;
 Yours not the sluice is To purge from abuses
 Prescriptive the Augean stable !

EPOPTÆ (*departing*).

Hiccupedickupe, konxompax !
 Idas, sing Idas ; and stick like wax !

GEPHYRISTÆ.

Get along, get along With your pottle-pot song ;
 We scout such assistance ;
 Epopts, *sacristie* ! You're but milksops of *mystæ* ;
 So off with you, scornfully hiss'd hence !

Ciel ! how they draggle, Waggle and straggle !
 Saw you e'er such a swab array ?
 But they're out of hearing ; The last's disappearing,—
 So now let's back to the *cabaret* !

EPOPTÆ (*in the distance*).

Wax, koäx, quack, whack, kack, kk !

»

GEPHYRISTÆ.

(*Manet CORYPHÆUS*).

I'm sorry for Idas,— I'm certain he's tried as
 Hard as man could
 To send us recruits ; But—these English brutes !
 Not one of them but has a brood
 Of brats and a wife ; And leads a better life
 Than any of us, even sober ;
 Content to plod In the ways of God,
 And only getting drunk in October.

[*Exit.*

ENVOI.

(JOHANNES *moraliseth.*)

Not every son his own sire knows ;
Not every sire his own by-blows,—
And Words, seditious or schismatic,
Got, glibly, in Thought's windy attic,
By law unsanction'd or propriety,
Are bastards loos'd upon Society,
To gen'rate their own adder brood
Of errors, pois'ning Nature's blood,
And then return, with well-earn'd titles,
To claim their dad, and gnaw his vitals.
Oh that we all thought more of this,
That Self is still Self's Nemesis ;
That idle Thoughts are serious things,
That reckless Words bear scorpion stings
Which turn suicidal on their sire
When Time rings round his guilt with fire !
Our pleasant vices are the whips
That scourge us ; and the fruit o' the lips
Blisters them when we taste the wine
We fondly laid up as divine,
Press'd from the grape of sceptic licence,
Not in God's vineyard grown, but Python's,—
Stern Retribution crowns the cup,
And bids us drink the venom up.

Such Idas' fate ! I don't suppose
He sees six inches 'fore his nose ;
But crops grow fast while sowers sleep,
And he that sows the wind must reap—
Would the poor wretch had ne'er been born !—
The whirlwind of the Muses' scorn.

ALICE LORRAINE.

A TALE OF THE SOUTH DOWNS.

PART X.—CHAPTER LI.

IT may perhaps be said, without any painful exaggeration, that throughout the whole course of this grand war, struggle of great captains, and heroic business everywhere, few things made a deeper, sadder, and more sinister impression than the sudden disappearance of those fifty thousand guineas. On the other hand, it must not be supposed that the disappearance of guineas was rare. Far otherwise—as many people still alive can testify; and some of them perhaps with gratitude for their reappearance in the right quarter. But these particular fifty thousand were looked out for in so many places, and had so long been the subject of hope, as a really solid instalment of a shilling in the pound for heroes, that the most philosophical of these latter were inclined to use a short, strong word of distinctive nationality.

Poor Hilary felt that for this bad verb his own name must be the receptive case; and he vainly looked about for any remedy or rescue. Stiff as he was in the limbs, by reason of the straps of Don Alcides, and giddy of head from the staff of that most patriotic Spaniard, he found it for some time a little hard to reflect as calmly as he should have done. Indeed it was as much as he could do to mount his horse, who (unlike his master) had stuck to his post very steadfastly, and with sadness alike of soul and body to ride down to the fatal ford. Sergeant-major Bones and Corporal Nickles also remounted and followed the bewildered captain, keeping behind him

at a proper distance for quiet interchange of opinion.

"Corporal, now," said the sergeant-major, sliding his voice from behind one hand, "what may be your sentiments as consarns this very peccoliar and most misfortunate haxident?"

"Sergeant, it would be misbehooving," replied Nickles, who was a west-country man, "as well as an onceremonious thing for me to spake first in the matter. To you it belongeth, being the one as foretold it like a book; likewise senior hoffer." "

"Corporal, you are a credit to the army. Your discretion, at your age, is wonderful. There be so few young men as remember when a man has spoken right. I am the last man in the world to desire to be overpraised, or to take to myself any sense of it. And now I wants no credit for it. To me it seems to come natteral to discern things in a sort of way that I find in nobody else a'most."

"You doos, you doos," answered Corporal Nickles. "Many's the time as I've said to myself—'Whur can I goo, to find sergeant-major, in this here trick of the henemy?' And now, sergeant, what do 'ee think of this? No fear to tell truth in spaking 'long of me."

"Corporal, I have been thinking strongly, ever since us untied him. And I have been brought up in the world so much, that I means to think again of it."

"Why, sergeant, you never means to say——"

"Nickles, I means just what I means. I may be right, and yet again I may be altogether wrong; as is the way of every man. 'Let me alone' is all I say. But if I was sure as you could hold your tongue, I might have something to say to you. Not of any account, you know; but still, something."

"Now, sergeant, after all the thumps us has seen and been through together, you never would behave onhandsome to me."

"Corporal Nickles, if you put it upon that footing, I cannot deny you. And mind you, now, my opinion is that this is a very queer case indeed."

"Now, now, to think of that! Why, sergeant, you ought to be a general!"

"Nickles, no flattery; I am above it. Not but what I might have done so well as other people, if the will of the Lord had been so. Consarnin, however, of this to-do, and a precious rumpus it will be, my opinion is that we don't know half."

Speaking thus, the sergeant nodded to the corporal impressively, and jerked his thumb towards the captain in front, and winked, and then began again.

"You see, corporal, my place is to keep both eyes wide open. There was a many things as struck me up at the old Don's yonder. A carrying on in corners, and a going to lamps to read things, and a winking out of young ladies' eyes, to my mind most unmillitary. But I might a' thought that was all young people, and a handsome young chap going on as they will, only for what one of they dirty devils as drives them mules have said to me."

"No, now, sergeant; never, now!"

"As true as I sit this here hoss, when us come back with the sun

getting up, what did that pagan say to me? You seed him, corporal, a-running up, and you might have saved me the trouble, only you was nodding forward. 'Senhor captain,' he said to me, and the whites of his eyes was full of truth, 'the young cavalier has been too soft.' That was how I made out his country gibberish; the stuff they poor beggars are born to."

"It gooeth again the grain of my skin," Corporal Nickles answered, "to hearken them fellows chattering. But, sergeant, what did he say next?"

"Well, they may chatter, or hold their tongues, to them as cannot understand them. Requireth a gift, which is a denial to most folk to understand them. And what he said, Corporal Nickles, was this—that he was coming up the river, while the carts was waiting, and afore the robbery, mind you; and he seed a young woman come on to the bridge—you knows how they goes, corporal, when they expects you to look after them."

"Sergeant, I should think so."

"Well, she come on the bridge for all the world like that. Us have seen it fifty times. And she had a white handkercher on her head, or an Ishmaelish mantle; and she were looking out for some young chap. And our young cap'en come after her. And who do you think she were? Why, one of the daughters of the old Don up yonner!"

"Good heart alive, now, Sergeant Bones, I can't a'most belave it!"

"Nickles, I tell you what was told me—word for word; and I say no more. But knowing what the ways of the women is, as us dragoons is so forced to do, even after a marriage and family——"

"Ah, sergeant, sergeant! we tries in vain to keep inside the strick

line of dooty. I does whatever a man can do; and my father were a butcher."

"Corporal, it is one of the trials which the Lord has ordered. They do look up at one so, and they puts the middle of their lips up, and then with their bodies they turns away, as if there was nothing to look at. But, Nickles, they gives you no sort of a chance to come to the bottom of them. And this is what young cap'en will found out. The good females always is found out at last; the same as my poor wife was. But here us are. We have relaxed the bonds of discipline with conversation. Corporal, eyes right, and wait orders!"

While these two trusty and veteran fellows had been discussing a subject far too deep for a whole brigade of them, and still were full of tender recollections (dashed with good escape), poor Hilary had been vainly spurring, here and there, and all about, himself not come to his clear mind yet, only hoping to know where the money was gone. Hope, however, upon that point was disappointed, as usual. The track of the heavy carts was clear in the gravel of the river, and up the rocky bank, and on the old Roman road towards Merida. And then, at the distance of about a furlong from the Zujar, the rut of the wooden wheels turned sharply into an elbow of a mountain-road. Here, on the hump of a difficult rise, were marks, as if many kicks, and pricks, and even stabs, had been ministered to good mules labouring heavily. There was blood on the road, and the blue shine of friction, where hard rock encountered hard iron, and the scraping of holes in gravelly spots, and the nicks of big stones laid behind wheels to ease the tugging and afford the short relief of panting. These traces were plain, and becoming plainer as the road grew worse, for nearly a mile

of the mountain-side, and then the track turned suddenly into a thicket of dark ilex, where, out of British sight and ken, the spoil had been divided.

The treasure-carts had been upset, and two of the sturdy mules, at last foundered with hard labour, lay in their blood, contented that their work was over, and that man (a greater brute than themselves) had taken all he wanted out of them. The rest had been driven or ridden on, being useful for further torment. And here on the ground were five stout coffers of good British iron; but, alas! the good British gold was flown.

At this sight, Hilary stared a little; and the five chests in the morning sun glanced back at him with such a ludicrously sad expression of emptiness, that, in spite of all his trouble, the poor young captain broke into a hearty laugh. Then his horse walked up, and sniffed at them, being reminded, perhaps, of his manger; and Hilary, dismounting, found a solitary guinea lying in the dust, the last of fifty thousand. The trail of coarse esparto bags, into which the gold had been poured from the coffers, for the sake of easier transport, was very distinct in the parts untrampled by horses, mules, or brigands. But of all the marks there was none more conspicuous than the impressions of some man's boots, larger and heavier than the rest, and appearing, over and over again, here, there, and everywhere. For a few yards up the rugged mountain, these and other footprints might be traced without much trouble, till suddenly they dispersed, grew fainter, and then wholly disappeared in trackless, hopeless, and (to a stranger) impenetrable forest.

"Thou honest guinea that would not be stolen!" cried poor Lorraine, as he returned and picked up the one remaining coin; "haply I shall

never own another honest guinea. Forty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine prefer the ownership of rogues. Last of guineas, we will not part till gold outlives humanity!"

"Now, sir, is there anything we can do?" cried Bones and Nickles, or one of them. "We have followed all the way up this here long hill, for want of better orders."

"No, my good fellows, there is nothing to be done. We cannot follow any further. I must go with all speed to report myself. Follow me, if you can keep up."

The sergeant nodded to the corporal—for, loyal and steadfast as they were, suspicion was at work with them; that ugly worm which, once set going, wriggles into the stoutest heart. Surely it was a queer thing of the captain not even to let them examine the spot; but order was order, and without a word they followed the young officer back to the highroad, and then, for some hours in the heat of the day, on the way towards Estremadura. At noontide they came to a bright, broad stream, known to them as the Guadalmez, a confluent of the Guadiana; and here they were challenged, to their great surprise, by a strong detachment of British hussars.

"What is your duty here?" asked Lorraine, as his uniform and face were acknowledged and saluted by sentries posted across the ford.

"To receive," cried an officer, riding through the river (for all of these people were wide awake), "Captain Lorraine and his Spanish convoy."

"I have no convoy," said Hilary, dropping his voice into very sad music. "All is lost. It is partly your fault. You were ordered to meet me at the Zujar ford."

"This is the Zujar ford," the cavalry major answered, sternly; and Hilary's heart fell from its last hope of recovering anything.

"We have been here these three days waiting for you," continued the major, with vehemence; "we have lost all our chance of a glorious brush; we sent you advice that we were waiting for you. And now you appear without your convoy! Captain Lorraine, what does all this mean?"

"Major, my explanation is due at headquarters, rather than to you."

"And a deuced hard job you'll have to give it, or my name's not M'Rustie," the senior officer muttered, with more terseness and truth than courtesy. "I'm blessed if I'd stand in your shoes before Old Beaky for a trifle."

Poor Hilary tried in vain to look as if he took it lightly. Even his bright and buoyant nature could not lift head against the sea of troubles all in front of him.

"I have done no harm," he kept saying to himself, when, after the few words that duty demanded, he urged his stout horse forward; and the faithful sergeant and corporal, who had shunned all inquisitive hussars, spurred vigorously after him, feeling themselves (as a Briton loves to feel himself) pregnant with mighty evidence. "What harm have I done?" asked Hilary. "I saw to everything; I worked hard. I never quitted my post, except through duty towards a lady. Any gentleman must have done what I did. To be an officer is an adornment; to be a gentleman is a necessity."

"Have you felt altogether," said conscience to him, "the necessity of that necessity? Have you found it impossible to depart from a gentleman's first duty—good faith to those who trust in him? When you found yourself bewitched with a foreign lady, did you even let your first love know it? For months you have been playing fast and loose, not caring what misery you caused. And now you are fast

in the trap of your looseness. Whatever happens serves you right."

"Whatever happens serves me right!" cried Hilary Lorraine, aloud, as he lifted his sword just a little way forth, for the last time to admire it, and into the sheath dropped a quick, hot tear. "I have done my duty as an officer badly; and

far worse as a gentleman. But, Mabel, if you could see me now, I think that you would grieve for me."

He felt his heart grow warm again with the thought of his own Mabel; and in the courage of that thought he stood before Lord Wellington.

CHAPTER LII.

The hero of a hundred fights (otherwise called "Old Beaky") had just scraped through a choking trouble on the score of money with the grasping Portuguese regency; and now, in the year 1813, he was busier than even he had ever found himself before. He had to combine, in most delicate manner and with exquisite nicety of time, the movements of columns whose number scarcely even to himself was clear; for the force of rivers unusually strong, and the doubt of bridges successively broken, and the hardship of the *Tras os Montes*, and the scattering of soldiers, who for want of money had to "subsist themselves"—which means to hunt far afield after cows, sheep, and hens—also the shifty and unpronounced tactics of the enemy, and a great many other disturbing elements, enough to make calculation sea-sick,—a senior wrangler, or even Herr Steinitz, the Wellington of the chess-board, each in his province, might go astray, and trust at last to luck itself to cut the tangled knot for him.

It was a very grand movement, and triumphantly successful; opening up as fine a march as can be found in history, sweeping onward in victory, and closing with conquest of the Frenchmen in their own France, and nothing left to stop the advance on Paris. "Was all this luck, or was it skill?" the

historian asks in wonder; and the answer, perhaps, may be found in the proverb—"luck has a mother's love for skill."

Be that as it may, it is quite certain that Hilary, though he had shown no skill, had some little luck in the present case. For the Commander-in-Chief was a great deal too busy, and had all his officers too hard at work, to order, without fatal loss of time, a general court-martial now. Moreover, he had his own reasons for keeping the matter as quiet as possible, for at least another fortnight. Every soldier by that time would be in march, and unable to turn his back on Brown Bess; whereas now there were some who might lawfully cast away the knapsack, if they knew that their bounty was again no better than a cloudy hope. And, again, there were some ugly pot-hooks of English questions to be dealt with.

All these things passed through the rapid mind of the General, as he reined his horse, and listened calmly to poor Lorraine's over-true report. And then he fixed his keen grey eyes upon Hilary, and said shortly—

"What were you doing upon that bridge?"

"That is a question," replied Lorraine, while marvelling at his own audacity, "which I am pledged by my honour, as a gentleman, not to answer."

"By your duty as an officer, in a place of special trust, you are bound to answer it."

"General, I cannot. My lord, as I rather must call you now, I wish I could answer; but I cannot."

"You have no suspicion who it was that stole the money, with such prearrangement?"

"I have a suspicion, but nothing more; and it makes me feel treacherous, to suspect it."

"Never mind that. We have rogues to deal with. What is your suspicion?"

"My lord, I am sorry to say that again I cannot, in honour, answer you."

"Captain Lorraine, I have no time to spare;" Lord Wellington had been more than once interrupted by despatches. "Once and for all, do you mean to give any, or no, explanation of your conduct, in losing £50,000?"

"General, all my life, and the honour of my family, depend upon what I do now."

"Then go and seek advice, Lorraine," the General answered kindly, for his heart was kind; and he had taken a liking for this young fellow, and knew a little of his family.

"I have no one to go to for advice, my lord. What is your advice to me?" With these words, Hilary looked so wretched and yet so proud from his well-bred face, and beautifully-shaped blue eyes, that his General stopped from his hurry to pity him. And then he looked gently at the poor young fellow.

"This is the most irregular state of things I have ever had to deal with. You have lost a month's pay of our army, and enough to last them half a year; and you seem to think that you have done great things, and refuse all explanation.

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Is there any chance of recovering the money?"

"There might be, my lord, if we were not pushing so rapidly on for the Pyrenees."

"There might be, if we threw away our campaign! You have two courses before you; at least, if I choose to offer them. Will you take my advice, if I offer the choice?"

"I am only too glad to have any choice; and anything chosen for me by you."

"Then this is just how you stand, Lorraine—if we allow the alternative. You may demand a court-martial, or you may resign your commission. On the other hand, as you know, a court-martial may at once be called upon you. What answer are you prepared to make, when asked why you left your convoy?"

"I should be more stubborn to them than even your lordship has let me be to you."

"Then, Captain Lorraine, resign your commission. With my approval, it can be done."

"Resign my commission!" Lorraine exclaimed, reeling as if he had received a shot, and catching at the mane of the General's horse, without knowing what he was doing. "Oh no, I never could do that."

"Very well. I have given you my advice. You prefer your own decision; and I have other things to attend to. Captain Money will receive your sword. You are under arrest, till we can form a court."

"My lord, it would break my father's heart, if he were to hear of such a thing. I suppose I had better resign my commission, if I may."

"Put that in writing, and send it to me. I will forward it to the Horse Guards with a memorandum from myself. I am sorry to lose you, Captain Lorraine; you might

have done well, if you had only proved as vigilant as you are active and gallant. But one word more—what made you stop short at the ford of a little mountain-stream? I chose you as knowing the country well. You must have known that the Zujar ford was twenty miles further on your road."

"I know all that country too well, my lord. We halted at the real Zujar ford. General Hill's detachment stopped at the ford of the Guadalmaz. It is wrongly called the Zujar there. The Zujar has taken a great sweep to the east and fallen into the Guadalmaz and Guadalmazmar. Major M'Rustie must have been misled; and no doubt it was done on purpose. I have my information on the very best authority."

"May I ask, upon what authority? Are you pledged in honour to conceal even that?"

"No, I may tell that, I do believe," said Hilary, after one moment's thought, and with his old bright simple smile. "I had it, my lord, from the two young ladies—the daughters of the Count of Zamora."

"Aha!" cried Lord Wellington (being almost as fond of young ladies as they of him, and touched perhaps for the moment by the magic of a sweet young smile), "I begin to understand the bridge-affair. But I fear that young ladies can hardly be cited as authorities on geography. Otherwise, we might make out a case against the Spanish authorities for sending our escort to the wrong place. And the Spanish escort, as you say, took that for the proper place."

"Certainly, my lord, they did. And so did the Count, and everybody. Is there any hope now that I may be acquitted?"

At a moment's notice from hope that she would like to come back to her lodgings, Hilary opened his eyes

so wide, and his heart so wide, and every other place that hope is generally partial to, that the great commander (who trusted as little as possible of his work to hope) could not help smiling a quick, dry smile. And he felt some pain, as, word by word, he demolished hope in Hilary.

"The point of the thing is the money, Lorraine. And that we never could recover from the Spaniards, even if it was lost through them; for the very good reason that they have not got it. And even supposing the mistake to be theirs, and our escort to have been sent astray, you were a party to that mistake. And more than that; you were bound to see that the treasure did not cross the river, until our men were there. Did you do so?"

"Oh, if I only had done that, I should not be so miserable."

"Exactly so. You neglected your duty. Take more care of your own money than you have taken of ours, Lorraine. Do as I told you. And now, good-bye."

The General, who had long been chafing at so much discourse just now, offered his hand to Lorraine, as one who was now a mere civilian.

"Is there no hope?" asked Hilary, dropping a tear into the mane of the restive horse. "Can I never be restored, my lord?"

"Never; unless the money is made good before we go into quarters again. A heavy price for a captain's commission!"

"If it is made good, my lord, will you restore me from this deep disgrace?"

"The question will be for his Royal Highness. But I think that in such an extraordinary case, you may rely—at any rate you may rely upon my good word, Lorraine."

"I thank you, my lord. The money shall be paid. Not for the sake of my commission, but for the honour of our family."

CHAPTER LIII.

The British army now set forth on its grand career of victory, with an entirely new set of breeches. Interception of convoys, and other adverse circumstances, had kept our heroes from having any money, although they had new pockets. And the British Government, with keen insight into British nature, had insisted upon it, in the last contract, that the pockets should be all four inches wide. With this the soldiers were delighted—for all the very bravest men are boys—and they put their knuckles into their pockets, and felt what a lot of money they would hold. And though the money did not come, there was the due preparation for it. It might come any day, for all they knew; and what fools they must have looked, if their pockets would not hold it! In short, these men laid on their legs to march with empty pockets; and march they did, as history shows, all the better for not having sixpence.

Though Hilary was so heartily liked, both in his own regiment and by the Staff, time (which had failed for his trial) also failed for pity of the issue. The General had desired that as little as possible should be said; and even if any one had wished to argue, the hurry and bustle would have stopped his mouth. Lorraine's old comrades were far in advance; and the Staff, like a shuttle, was darting about; and the hills and the valleys were clapping their hands to the happy accompaniment of the drum.

Casting by every outward sign that he ever had been a soldier, Hilary Lorraine set forth on his sad retreat from this fine advance; afoot, and bearing on his shoulder a canvas bag on a truncheon of olive. He would not accept any

knapsack, pouch, or soldier's usage of any kind. He had lost all right to that, being now but a shattered young gentleman on his way home.

However, in one way he showed good sense. By losing such a heap of the public money, he had learned to look a little better after his own; so he drew every farthing that he could get of his father's cash and his grandmother's, but scorned to accept the arrears of his pay; because he could not get them.

To a man of old, or of middle age, it has become (or it ought to become) a matter of very small account that he has thrown away his life. He has seen so many who have done the like (through indolence, pride, bad temper, reserve, timidity, or fool's confidence—into which the most timid men generally rush), that he knows himself now to be a fine example, instead of standing forth as a very unpleasant exception to the rule. And now, if he takes it all together, he finds many fellows who have done much worse, and seem all the better for it. Has he missed an appointment? They cut down the salary. Did he bang his back-door on a rising man? Well, the man, since he rose, has forgotten his hosts. Has he married a shrew? She looks after his kitchen. Remembering and reflecting thus, almost any good man must refuse to be called, in the long-run, a bigger fool than his neighbours.

But a young man is not yet late enough to know what human life is. He is sure that he sees by foresight all the things which, as they pass us, leave so little time for insight, and of which the only true view is the calm and pleasant retrospect. And then, like a high-stepping colt

brought suddenly on his knees, to a sense of Macadam, he flounders about in amazement so, that if the fatal damage is not done to him, he does it.

Lorraine was not one of those who cry, as the poets of all present ages do—"Let the world stand still, because I don't get on." Nevertheless he was greatly downcast, to find his own little world so early brought to a sudden stand-still. And it seems to be sadly true that the more of versatile quickness a man has in him, the less there remains to expect of him, in the way of pith and substance. But Hilary now was in no condition to go into any philosophies. He made up his mind to walk down to the sea, and take ship at some good seaport; and having been pleased at Malaga by the kind, quiet ways of the people, and knowing the port to be unobserved by French and American cruisers, he thought that he might as well try his luck once more in that direction.

Swift of foot as he was, and lightsome, when his heart was toward, he did not get along very fast on this penitential journey. So that it was the ninth day or the tenth, from his being turned out of the army, when he came once more to the "Bridge of Echoes," henceforth his "Bridge of Sighs" for ever. Here he stopped and ate his supper, for his appetite was good again; and then he looked up and down the Zujar, and said to himself what a fool he was. For lo! where Claudia had held him trembling over a fearful abyss of torrent (as it seemed by moonlight), there now was no more than nine inches of water, gliding along very pleasantly. These Spanish waters were out of his knowledge, as much as the Spanish ladies were; but though the springs might have been much

higher a fortnight ago than they were now, Hilary could not help thinking that Claudia, instead of fainting on the verge, might have jumped over, at any moment, without spraining her very neat ankles. And then he remembered that it was this same beautiful and romantic girl who had proved to the satisfaction of the Spanish colonel that this was the only Zujar ford, for that river merged its name where it joined the longer and larger Guadalmez. Upon this question there long had arisen a hopeful dilemma in Hilary's mind, which stated itself in this form. If this were the true Zujar ford, then surely the Spaniards, the natives of the country, were bound to apprise General Hill thereof. If this were not the Zujar ford, then the Spaniards were liable for the treasure beyond this place and as far as the true one. The latter was of course the stronger horn of the dilemma; but unluckily there arose against it a mighty monster of fact, quite strong enough to take even the Minotaur by the horns. Suppose the brave Spaniards to owe the money, it was impossible to suppose that they could pay it.

This reflection gave Hilary such a pain in his side that he straightway dropped it. And beholding the vivid summer sky beginning to darken into deeper blue, and the juts of the mountainous places preparing to throw light and shadow lengthwise, and the simmering of the sun-heat sinking into white mists laid abroad, he made up his mind to put best foot foremost, and sleep at Monte Argento. For he felt quite sure of the goodwill and sympathy of that pure hidalgo, the noble Count of Zamora; and from the young Donnas he might learn something about his misadventure. He could not bring himself to be-

lieve that Claudia had been privy to the dastardly outrage upon himself. His nature was too frank and open to foster such mean ideas. Young ladies were the best and sweetest, the kindest and the largest-hearted, of created beings. So they were, and so they are; but all rules have exceptions.

Hilary, as he walked up the hill (down which he had ridden so gallantly scarcely more than a fortnight since), was touched with many thinkings. The fall of the sun (which falls and rises over us so magnanimously) had that power upon his body which it has on all things. The sun was going; he had done his work, and was tired of looking at people; mount as you might, the sun was sinking, and disdained all shadows and oblation of memorial.

Through the growth of darkness thus, and the urgency of froward trees (that could not fold their arms and go to sleep without some rustling), and all the many quiet sounds that nurse the repose of evening, Lorraine came to the heavy gates that had once secured the money. The porter knew him, and was glad to let in the young British officer, whose dollars leaping right and left had made him many household friends. But in the hall the old steward met him, and with many grave inclinations of his head and body, mourned that he could not receive the illustrious Senhor.

"There is in the castle no one now but my noble mistress the Donna Camilla. His Excellence the Count is away, far from home at the wars."

"And the young Lady Claudia, where is she? I beg your pardon, steward, if I ought not to ask the question."

For the ancient steward had turned away at the sound of Donna Claudia's name; and pretending to

be very deaf, began to trim a lamp or two.

"Will the Donna Camilla permit me to see her for one minute, or for two perhaps? Her father is from home; but you, Senhor steward, know what is correct, and thus will act."

Hilary had not been so frightened at his own temerity in the deadly breach of Badajos as now when he felt himself softly slipping a brace of humble English guineas into this lofty Spaniard's palm. The steward, without knowing what he was about, except that he was trimming a very stubborn lamp, felt with his thumb that there must be a brace, and with contemptuous indignation let them slide into his pocket.

"Senhor, I will do only what is right. I am of fifty years almost in this noble family. I am trusted, as I deserve. What I do is what the Count himself would do. But a very sad thing has happened. We are obliged now to be most careful. The Senhor knows what the ladies are?"

"Senhor steward, that is the very thing that I never do know. You know them well. But, alas! I do not."

"Alas! I do," said the steward, panting, and longing to pour forth experience; but he saw some women peeping down-stairs, and took the upper hand of them. "Senhor, it is not worth the knowing. Our affairs are loftier. Go back, all you women, and prepare for bed. Have you not had your supper? Now, Senhor, in here for a minute, if you please; patience passeth all things."

But Hilary's patience itself was passed, as he waited in this little ante-room, ere the steward returned with the Donna Camilla, and, with a low bow, showed her in, and posted himself in a corner. She was dressed in pure white, which

Hilary knew to be the mourning costume of the family.

The hand which the young Andalusian lady offered was cold and trembling, and her aspect and manner were timid and abashed.

"Begone!" she cried to the worthy steward, with a sudden indignation, which perhaps relieved her. "What now shall I do?" said the steward to himself, with one hand spread upon his silver beard; "is this one also to run away?"

"Begone!" said Camilla to him once more, looking so grand that he could only go; and then quietly bolting the old gentleman out. After which she returned to Hilary.

"Senhor captain, I am very sorry to offer you any scenes of force. You have had too many from our family."

"I do not understand you, Senhorita. From your family I have received nothing but kindness, hospitality, and love."

"Alas, Senhor! and heavy blows. Our proverb is, 'Love leads to blows;' and this was our return to you. But she is of our family no more."

"I am at a loss. It is my stupidity. I do not know at all what is meant."

"In sincerity, the cavalier has no suspicion who smote down and robbed him?"

"In sincerity, the cavalier knows not; although he would be very glad to know."

"Is it possible? Oh the dark treachery! It was my cousin who struck you down; my sister who betrayed you."

"Ah, well!" said Lorraine, in a moment seeing how she trembled for his words, and how terribly she felt the shame; "if it be so, I am still in her debt. She saved my life once, and she spared it again. Now, as you see, I am none the worse. The only loser is the Bri-

tish Government, which can well afford to pay."

"It is not so. The loss is ours, of honour, faith, and gratitude."

"I pray you not to take it so. Everybody knows that the fault was mine. And whatever has happened only served me right."

"It served you aright for trusting us! It is too true. It is a bitter saying. My father mourns, and I mourn. She never more will be his daughter, and never more my sister."

"I pray you," said Hilary, taking her hand, as she turned away to control herself—"I pray you, Donna Camilla, to look at this little matter sensibly. I now understand the whole of it. Your sister is of very warm and strong patriotic sentiments. She felt that this money would do more good as the property of the *partidas* than as the pay of the British troops. And so she exerted herself to get it. All good Spaniards would have thought the same."

"She exerted herself to disgrace herself, and to disgrace her family. The money is not among the *partidas*, but all in the bags of her cousin Alcides, whom she has married without dispensation, and with her father's sanction forged. Can you make the best of that, Senhor?"

Hilary certainly could not make anything very good out of this. And cheerful though his nature was, and tolerably magnanimous, he could not be expected to enjoy the treatment he had met with. To be knocked down and robbed was bad enough; to be disgraced was a great deal worse; but to be cut out by a rival, betrayed into his power, and made to pay for his wedding with trust-money belonging to poor soldiers,—all this was enough to embitter even the sweet and kind nature of young Lorraine. Therefore his face was unlike itself,

as he turned it away from the young Spanish lady, being much taken up with his own troubles, and not yet ready to make light of them.

"Will you not speak to me, *Senhor*? I am not in any way guilty of this. I would have surrendered the whole of my life——"

"I pray you to pardon me," Hilary answered. "I am not accustomed to this sort of thing. Where are they now? Can I follow them?"

"Even a Spaniard could not find them. My brothers would not attempt it. Alcides knows every in and out. He has hidden his prize in the mountains of the north."

"If that is so, I can only hasten to say farewell to the Spanish land."

"To go away, and to never come back! Is it possible that you could do that?"

"It may be a bitter thing; but I must try. I am now on my way to Malaga. Being discharged from the British army, I have only to find my own way home."

"It cannot be; it never can be! Our officers lose a mule's-load of money, or spend it at cards; and we keep them still, *Senhor* captain. You must have made some mistake. They never could discharge you."

"If there has been any mistake," said Hilary, regaining his sweet smile, with his sense of humour, "it is on their part, not on mine. Discharged I am; and the British army, as well as the Spanish cause, must do their best to get on without me."

"Saints of heaven! And you will go, and never come back any more?"

"With the help of the saints, that is my hope. What other hope is left to me?"

Camilla de Montalvan did not answer this question with her lips, but more than answered it with her

eyes. She fell back suddenly, as if with terror, into a great blue velvet chair, and her black tresses lay on her snowy arms, although her shapely neck reclined. Then with a gentle sigh, as if recovering from a troubled dream, she raised her eyes to Hilary's, and let them dwell there long enough to make him wonder where he was. And he saw that he had but to speak the word to become the owner of grace and beauty, wealth, and rank in the Spanish army, and (at least for a time) true love.

But, alas! a burned child dreads the fire. There still was a bump on Lorraine's head from the staff of Don Alcides; and Camilla's eyes were too like Claudia's to be trusted all at once. Moreover, Hilary thought of Mabel, of all her goodness, and proven trust; and Spanish ladies, though they might be queens, had no temptation for him now. And perhaps he thought—as quick men think of little things unpleasantly—"I do not want a wife whose eyes will always be deeper than my own." And so he resolved to be off as soon as it could be done politely.

Camilla, having been disappointed more than once of love's reply, clearly saw what was going on, and called her pride to the rescue. The cavalier should not say farewell to her; she would say it to the cavalier. Also, she would let him know one thing.

"If you must leave us, Captain Lorraine, and return to your native land, you will at least permit me to do what my father would have done if he were at home—to send you with escort to Malaga. The roads are dangerous. You must not go alone."

"I thank you. I am scarcely worth robbing now. I can sing in the presence of the bandit."

"You will grant me this last favour, I am sure, if I tell you one

thing. It was not that wicked Claudia, who drew the iron from your wound."

"It was not the Donna Claudia! To whom then do I owe my life?"

"Can you not, by any means, endeavour to conjecture?"

"How glad I am!" He answered, as he kissed her cold and trembling hand, "The lady to whom I owe my life is gentle, good, and truthful."

"There is no debt of life, Senhor. But would it have grieved you, now, if Claudia had done it? Then be assured that she did not do it. Her manner never was to do anything good to any one. And yet, how wonderful are things! Everybody loved her. It is no good to be good, I fear. Pedro, you are at the door then, are you? You have taken care to hear everything. Go order a repast for the cavalier of the best we have, and men and horses to conduct him to Malaga. Be quick, I say, and show no hesitation." At her urgent words the steward went, yet grumbling and reluctant, and glancing over his shoulder all the way along the passage. "How that old man amuses me!" she continued, to the wondering Hilary, who had never dreamed that she could speak sharply; "ever since my sister's disgrace he thinks that his duty is to watch me. Ah! what am I to be watched for?"

"Because," said Hilary, "there is no Spaniard who would not long to steal the beautiful young Donna."

"No Spaniard shall ever do that. But haste; you are in such hurry for the sunny land of Anglia."

"I do not understand the Senhorita. Why should I hurry to my great disgrace? I shall never hear the last of the money I have lost."

"'Tis all money, money, money, in the noble England. But the friends of the Captain need not mourn; for the money was not his nor theirs."

This grandly philosophical, and most truly Spanish, view of the case destroyed poor Hilary's last fond hope of any sense of a debt of honour on the part of the Montalvans. If the money lost had been Hilary's own, the Count of Zamora (all compact of chivalry and rectitude) might have discovered that he was bound to redeem his daughter's robbery. But as it stood, there was no such chance. Private honour is a mountain rill that does not always lead to any lake of public honesty. All Spaniards would bow to the will of the Lord that British guineas should slip into Spanish hands so providentially.

"We do not take such things just so," said young Lorraine, quite sadly. "I must go home and restore the money. Donna Camilla, I must say farewell."

"You will come again when you are restored? When you have proved that you did not take the money for yourself, Senhor, you will remember your Spanish friends?"

"I never shall forget my Spanish friends. To you I owe my life, and hold it (as long as I hold it) at your command."

"It is generously said, Senhor. Generosity always makes me weep. And so, farewell."

CHAPTER LIV.

In all the British army—then a walking wood of British oak, without a yard of sapling—there was no

bit of better stuff than the five feet and a quarter (allowing for his good game leg) of Major, by this time

Colonel Clumps. This officer knew what he had to do, and he made a point of doing it. Being short of imagination, he despised that foolish gift, and marvelled over and over again at others for laughing so at nothing. That whimsical tickling of the veins of thought, which some people give so and some receive (with equal delight on either side), humour, or wit, or whatever it is, to Colonel Clumps was a vicious thing. Everything must be either true or false. If it were true, who could laugh at the truth? If it were false, who should laugh at a falsehood?

Many a good man has reasoned thus, reducing laughter under law, and himself thenceforth abandoned by that lawless element. Colonel Clumps had always taken solid views of everything, and the longer he lived in the world the less he felt inclined to laugh at it. But, that laughter might not be robbed of all its dues and royalties, just nature had provided that, as the Colonel would not laugh at the world, the world should laugh at the Colonel. He had been the subject of more bad jokes, one-sided pleasantries, and heartless hoaxes, than any other man in the army; with the usual result that now he scarcely ever believed the truth, while he still retained for the pleasure of his friends a tempting stock of his native confidence in error. So that it came to pass that when Colonel Clumps (after the battle of Vittoria, in which he had shown conspicuous valour) was told of poor Hilary's sad disgrace, he was a great deal too clever and astute to believe a single word of it.

"It is ludicrous, perfectly ludicrous!" he said, that being the strongest adjective he knew to express pure impossibility. "A gallant young fellow to be cashiered without even a court-martial! How dare you tell me such a thing, sir?

I am not a man to be rough-ridden. Nobody ever has imposed on me. And the boy is almost a sort of cousin of my own. The first family in the kingdom, sir."

The Colonel flew into so great a rage, twisting his white hair, and stamping his lame heel, that the officer who had brought the news, being one of his own subalterns, wisely retired into doubts about it, and hinted that nobody knew the reason, and therefore that it could not be true.

"If I mention that absurd report about young Lorraine," thought Colonel Clumps, when writing to Lady de Lampnor, "I may do harm, and I can do no good, but only get myself laughed at as the victim of a stupid hoax. So I will say no more about him, except that I have not seen him lately, being so far from headquarters, and knowing how Old Beaky is driving the Staff about." And before the brave Colonel found opportunity of taking the pen in hand again, he was heavily wounded in a skirmish with the French rear-guard, and ordered home, as hereafter will perhaps appear.

It also happened that Mr Capper's friends, those two officers who had earned so little of Mabel's gratitude by news of Hilary, were harassed and knocked about too much to find any time for writing letters. And as the Gazette in those days neglected the smaller concerns of the army, and became so hurried by the march of events, and the rapid sequence of battles, that the doings of junior officers slipped through its fingers until long afterwards, the result was that neither Coombe Lorraine nor Old Applewood farm received for months any news of the young staff officer. Neither did he yet present himself at either of those homesteads. For, as the ancient saying runs, misfortunes never come alone. The ship in which Hilary

sailed for England from the port of Cadiz—for he found no transport at Malaga—The Flower of Kent, as she was called, which appeared to him an excellent omen, was nipped in the bud of her homeward voyage. She met with a nasty French privateer to the southward of Cape Finisterre. In vain she crowded sail, and tried every known resource of seamanship; the Frenchman had the heels of her, and laid her on board at sundown. Lorraine, and two or three old soldiers, battered and going to hospital, had no idea of striking, except in the British way of doing it. But the master and the mate knew better, and stopped the hopeless conflict. So the Frenchmen sacked and scuttled the ship in the most scientific manner, and, wanting no prisoners, landed the crew on a desolate strand of Galicia, without any money to save them.

This being their condition, it is the proper thing to leave them so; for nothing is more unwise than to ask, or rather to "institute inquiries," as to the doings of people who are much too likely to require a loan; therefore return we to the South Down hills.

The wet, ungenial, and stormy summer of 1813 was passing into a wetter, more cheerless, and most tempestuous autumn. On the northern slopes of the light-earthed hills the moss had come over the herbage, and the sweet nibble of the sheep was souring. The huddled trees (which here and there rise just to the level of the ridge, and then seem polled by the sweep of the wind-rush), the bushes also, and the gorse itself, stood, or rather stooped, beneath the burden of perpetual wet. The leaves hung down in a heavy drizzle, unable to detach themselves from the welting of the unripe stalks; the husk of the beech and the key of the ash were shrivelled for want

of kernels, and the clusters of the hazel-nut had no sun-varnish on them. The weakness of the summer sun (whether his face was spotted overmuch, or too immaculate) and the humour of clouds, and the tenor of winds, and even the tendency of the earth itself to devolve into eccentricity⁹,—these, and a hundred other causes, for the present state of the weather were found, according to where they were looked for. On one point only there was no contradiction,—things were not as they ought to be.

Even the rector of West Lorraine, a man of most cheerful mind, and not to be put down by any one, laying to the will of the Lord his failures, and to his own merits all good success,—even the Rev. Struan Hales was scarcely a match for the weather. Sportsmen in those days did not walk in sevenfold armour, for fear of a thorn, or a shower, or a cow-dab; nor skulked they for two hours in a rick, awaiting the joy of one butchering minute. Fair play for man, and dog, and gun, and fur and feather, was then the rule; and a day of sport meant a day of work, and healthful change, and fine exercise. Therefore, Mr Hales went forth with his long and heavily-loaded gun, to comfort himself and refresh his mind, whatever the weather might be about, upon six days out of every seven. The hounds had not begun to meet; the rivers were all in flood, of course; the air was so full of rheumatism that no man could crook his arm to write a sermon, or work a concordance. Two sick old women had taken a fancy for pheasant boiled with artichoke;—willy-nilly, the parson found it a momentous duty now to shoot.

And who went with him? There is no such thing as consistence of the human mind; yet well as this glorious truth was known, and be-

moaned by every one for his neighbour's sake—not they, not all the parish, nor even we of the enlarged philosophy, could or can ever be brought to believe our own eyes that it was Bonny! But, in spite of all impossibility, it was; and the explanation requires relapse.

Is it within recollection that the rector once shot a boy in a hedge? The boy had clomb up into an ivied stump, for purposes of his own, combining review with criticism. All critics deserve to be shot if they dare to cross the grand aims of true enterprise. They pepper, and are peppered; but they generally get the best of it. And so did this boy that was shot in the hedge. Being of a crafty order, he dropped, and howled and rolled so piteously, that poor Mr Hales, although he had fired at a distance of more than fourscore yards from the latent vagabond, cast down his gun in the horror of having slain a fellow-creature. But when he ran up and turned him over to search for the fatal injury, the boy so vigorously kicked and roared, that the parson had great hopes of him. After some more rolling, a balance was struck; the boy had some blue spots under his skin, and a broad gold guinea to plaster them.

Now this boy was not our Bonny, nor fit in any way to compare with him. But uncivilised minds are very jealous; and next to our Bonny, this boy that was shot was the furthest from civilisation of all the boys of the neighbourhood. Therefore, of course, bitter jealousy raged betwixt him and the real outsider. Now the boy that was shot got a new pair of boots from the balance of his guinea, and a new pair of legs to his nether garments, under his mother's guidance. And to show what he was, and remove all doubts of the genuine expenditure, his father and mother combined and

pricked him, with a pin in a stick, to the Sunday-school. Here Madge Hales (the second and strongest daughter of the church) laid hold of him, and converted him into right views of theology, hanging upon sound pot-hooks.

But a far greater mind than Bill Harkles could own was watching this noble experiment. Bonny had always hankered kindly after a knowledge of "pictur-books." The gifts of nature were hatching inside him, and chipped at the shell of his chickenhood. He had thrashed Bill Harkles in two fair fights, without any aid from his donkey, and he felt that Bill's mind had no right whatever to be brought up to look down on him.

This boy, therefore, being sneered at by erudite Bill Harkles, knew that his fists would be no fair answer, and retired to his cave. Here he looked over his many pickings, and proudly confessing inferior learning, refreshed himself with superior wealth. And this meditation, having sound foundation, satisfied him till the next market-day—the market-day at Steyning. Bonny had not much business here, but he always liked to look at things; and sometimes he got a good pannier of victuals, and sometimes he got nothing. For the farmers of the better sort put off their dinner till two o'clock, when the prime of the market was over, and then sat down to boiled beef and carrots in the yard of the White Horse Inn, and often did their best in that way.

Of this great "ordinary"—great at any rate as regards consumption—Farmer Gates, the churchwarden, was by ancestral right the chairman; but for several market-days the vice-presidency had been vacant. A hot competition had raged, and all Steyning had thrilled with high commotion about the succession to the knife and fork at the bottom of

the table; until it was announced amid general applause that Bottler was elected. It was a proud day for this good pigman, and perhaps a still prouder one for Bonny, when the new vice-president was inducted into the Windsor chair at the foot of the long and ancient table; and it marked the turning-point in the life of more than one then present.

The vice-president's cart was in the shed close by, and on the front lade sat Bonny, sniffing the beauty of the "silver-side," and the luscious suggestions of the marrow-bone. Polly longed fiercely to be up there with him; but her mother's stern sense of decorum forbade; the pretty Miss Bottlers would be toasted after dinner,—and was one to be spied in a pig-cart? No sooner was the cloth removed, than the chairman proposed, in most feeling and eloquent language, the health of his new colleague. And now it was Bottler's reply which created a grand revolution in Steyning. With graceful modesty he ascribed his present proud position, the realisation of his fondest hopes, neither to his well-known integrity, industry, strict attention to business, nor even the quality of his bacon. All these things, of course, contributed; but "what was the grand element of his unparalleled success in life?" A cry of "white stockings!" from the Bramber pig-sticker was sternly suppressed, and the man kicked out. "The grand element of his success in life was his classical education!"

Nobody knowing what was meant by this, thunders of applause ensued; until it was whispered from cup to cup that Bottler, when he was six years old, had been three months at the Grammar School. He might have forgotten every word he had learned, but any one might see that it was dung dug in. So a dozen of the farmers resolved at once to have their children Latined; and

Bonny in his inmost heart aspired to some education. What was the first step to golden knowledge? He put this question to himself obscurely, as he rode home on his faithful Jack, with all the marrow-bones of the great feast rattling in a bag behind him. From the case of Bill Harkles he reasoned soundly, that the first thing to do was to go and get shot.

On the following day—the month being August, or something very near it, in the year 1812 (a year behind the time we got on to), Mr Hales, to keep his hand in, took his favourite flint-gun down, and patted it, and reprimed it. He had finished his dinner, it had been a good one; and his partner in life had been lamenting the terrible price of butcher's meat. She did not see how it could end in anything short of a wicked rebellion, when the price of bread was put with it. And the rector had answered, with a wink to Cecil, "Order no meat for to-morrow, my dear, nor even for the next day. We shall see what we shall see." With this power of promise, he got on his legs, and stopped all who were fain to come after him. He knew every coney and coney's hole on the glebe, and on the clerk's land; and they all would now be out at grass, and must be treated gingerly. He was going to shoot for the pot, as sportsmen generally did in those days.

With visions of milky onions, about to be poured on a broad and well-boiled back, the rector (after sneaking through a furzy gate) peeped down a brown trench of the steep hillside; here he spied three little sandy juts of recent excavation, and on each of them sat a hunch-backed coney, proud of the labours of the day, and happily curling his whiskers. The rector, peering downward, saw the bulging over their large black eyes, and the prick of

their delicate ears, and their gentle chewing of the grass-blade. There was no chance of a running shot, for they would pop into earth in a moment; so he tried to get two of them into a line, and then he pulled his trigger. The nearest rabbit fell dead as a stone; but the rector could scarcely believe his eyes, when through the curls of the smoke he beheld, instead of the other rabbit, a ragged boy rolling, and kicking, and holloaing!

"Am I never to shoot without shooting a boy?" cried the parson, rushing forward: "another guinea! A likely thing! I vow I will only pay a shilling this time. The sport would ruin a bishop!"

But Mr Hales found to his great delight that the boy was not touched by a shot, nor even made pretence to be so. He had craftily crept through the bushes from below, and quietly lurked near the rabbits' hole, and after the shot, had darted forth, and thrown himself cleverly on the wounded rabbit, who otherwise must have got away to die a lingering death in his burrow. The quickness and skill of the boy, and the luck of thus bagging both rabbits, so pleased the rector that he gave him sixpence, and bade him follow to carry the game and to see more sport. Bonny had a natural turn for sport, which never could be beaten out of him, and to get it encouraged by the rector of the parish was indeed a godsend. And in his excitement at every shot, he poured forth his heart about rabbits, and hares, and wood-queists, and partridges, and even pheasants.

"Why, you know more than I do!" said the rector, kindly laying his hand on the shoulder of the boy, after loading for his tenth successful shot. "How ever have you picked up all these things? The very worst poacher of the coming age; or else the best gamekeeper."

"I looks about, or we does, me and Jack together," answered Bonny, with one of his broadest and most genuine grins; and the gleam of his teeth, and the twinkle of his eyes, enforced the explanation.

"Come to my house in the morning, Bonny," said the rector. And that was the making of him. For the boy that cleaned the knives and boots, had never conscientiously filled that sphere, though he was captain of the Bible-class. And now he had taken the measles so long, that they had put him to earth the celery. Here was an opening, and Bonny seized it; and though he made very queer work at first, his native ability carried him on, till he put a fine polish on everything. From eighteen-pence a week he rose to two and threepence, within nine months; and to this he soon added the empty bottles, and a commission upon the grease-pot!

Even now, all has not been told; for by bringing the cook good news of her sweetheart, and the parlour-maid dry sticks to light her fire, and by showing a tender interest in the chilblains of even the scullery-maid, he became such a favourite in the kitchen, that the captain of the Bible-class defied him to a battle in the wash-house. The battle was fought, and victory, though long doubtful, perched at last upon the banner of brave Bonny; and with mutual esteem, and four black eyes, the heroes parted.

After this, all ran smooth. The rector (who had enjoyed the conflict from his study-window, without looking off, more than he could help, from a sermon upon "Seek peace, and ensue it"), as soon as he had satisfied himself which of the two boys hit the straighter, went to an ancient wardrobe, and examined his bygone hunting-clothes. Here he found an old scarlet coat, made for him thirty years ago at Oxford, but now a

world too small; and he sighed that he had no son to inherit it. Also a pair of old buckskin breeches, fitter for his arms than his legs just now. The moths were in both; they were growing scurfy; sentiment must give way to sense. So Bonny got coat and breeches; and the maids with merry pinches, and screams of laughter, and consolatory kisses,

adapted them. He showed all this grandeur to his donkey Jack, and Jack was in two minds about snapping at it.

This matter being cleared, and the time brought up, here we are at West Lorraine in earnest, in the month of October 1813; long after Hilary's shocking disgrace; but before any of his own people knew it.

CHAPTER LV.

"What a lazy loon that Steenie Chapman is!" said the rector, for about the twentieth time, one fine October morning. "He knows what dreadful weather we get now, and yet he can't be here by nine o'clock! Too bad I call it; too bad a great deal. Send away the tea-pot, Caroline."

"But, my dear," answered Mrs Hales, who always made the best of every one, "you forget how very bad the roads must be, after all the rain we have had. And I am sure he will want a cup of tea after riding through such flooded roads."

"Tea indeed!" the parson muttered, as he strode in and out of the room, with his shot-belt dancing on his velveteen shooting-coat, and snapped his powder-flask impatiently; "Steenie's tea comes from the case, not the caddy. And the first gleam of sunshine I've seen for a week, after that heavy gale last night. It will rain before twelve o'clock, for a guinea. Cecil, run and see if you can find that boy Bonny. I shall start by myself, and send Bonny down the road with a message for Captain Chapman."

"The huntsman came out of the back-kitchen, Cecil, about two minutes ago," said Madge, who never missed a chance of a cut at Bonny, because he had thrashed her pet Bible-scholar; "he was routing about, with his red coat on, for

scraps of yellow soap and candle-ends."

"What a story!" cried Cecil, who was Bonny's champion, being his schoolmistress; "I wish your Dick was half as good a boy. He gets honester every day almost. I'll send him to you, papa, in two seconds. I suppose you'll speak to him at the side-door."

At a nod from her father, away she ran, while Madge followed slowly to help in the search: and finding that the boy had left the house, they took different paths in the garden to seek him, or overtake him on his homeward way. In a few moments Cecil, as she passed some laurels, held up her hand to recall her sister, and crossed the grass towards her very softly, with finger on lip and a mysterious look.

"Hush, and come here very quietly," she whispered; "I'll show you something as good as a play." Then the two girls peeped through the laurel bush, and watched with great interest what was going on.

In an alley of the kitchen-garden sat Bonny upon an old sea-kale pot, clad in his red coat and white breeches, and deeply meditating. Before him, upon an espalier tree, hung a tempting and beautiful apple, a scarlet pearmain, with its sleek sides glistening in the slant of the sunbeams.

"I'll lay you a shilling he steals

it," Madge whispered into the ear of her sister. "Done," replied Cecil, with her hand before her mouth. Meanwhile Bonny was giving them the benefit of his train of reasoning. His mouth was wide open, and his eyes very bright, and his forehead a field of perplexity.

"They're all agrubbing in the house," he reflected; "and they ain't been and offered me a bit to-day. There's ever so many more on the tree; and they locked up the scullery cupboard; and one on 'em called me a little warmint; and they tuck the key out of the beer-tap."

With all these wrongs upward, he stretched forth his hand, and pretty Cecil trembled for her shilling; shillings being very scarce with her. But the boy, without quite having touched the apple, drew back his hand; and that withdrawal perhaps was the turning-point of his life.

"He gived me all this," he said, looking at his sleeve; "and all on 'em stitched it up for me, and they lets me go in and out without watching; and twice I'se been out with him, shutting! I 'ont, I 'ont. And them bright apples seldom be worth a ting of."

Sturdily he arose, and gave a kick at one of the posts of the apple-tree, and set off for the gate as hard as he could go, while the virtuous vein should be uppermost.

"What a darling of honour!" cried Cecil Hales, jumping after him. "A Bayard, a Cato, an Aristides! He shall have his apple, and he shall have sixpence; and unlimited faith for ever. Bonny, come back. Here's your apple for you, and sixpence; and what would you like to have best in all the world now?"

"To go out shutting with the master, Miss."

"You shall do it; I will speak to papa, myself. If you please, Miss

Madge, pay up your shilling. Now come back, Bonny; your master wants you."

"You are a little too late for your errand, I fear," answered Margaret, pulling her purse out; "while you were pursuing this boy, I heard the sound of a grand arrival."

"So much the better!" cried Cecil, who (like her mother) always made the best of things. "Papa has been teasing his gun for an hour. Bonny, run back, and keep old Shot quiet. He will break his chain, by the noise he makes. You are as bad as he is; and you both shall go."

The rector—of all men the most hospitable, though himself so sober in the morning—revived Captain Chapman, or at least refreshed him, with brandy and bitters, after that long ride. And keenly heeding all hindrance, in his own hurry to be starting, he thought it a very bad sign for poor Alice, that Stephen received no comfort from one, nor two, nor even three, large glasses.

At length they set forth, with a sickly sun shrinking back from the promise of the morning, and a vaporous glisten in the white south-east, looking as watery as the sea. "I told you so, Steenie," said the parson, who knew every sign of the weather among these hills; "we ought to have started two hours sooner. If ever we had wet jackets in our life, we shall have them to-day, bold captain."

"It will bring in the snipes," said the captain, bravely. "We are not the sort of men, I take it, to heed a little sprinkle. Tom, have you got my bladder-coat?"

"All right, your honour," his keeper replied; and "see-ho!" cried Bonny, while the dogs were ranging.

"Where, where, where?" asked the captain, dancing in a breathless flurry round a tuft of heath. "I can't see him, where is he, boy?"

"Poke her up, boy," said the rector; "surely you would not shoot the poor thing on her form!"

"Let him sit till I see him," cried the captain, cocking both his barrels; "now I am ready. Where the devil is he?"

"She can't run away," answered Bonny, "because your honour's heel be on her whiskers. Ah, there her gooth! Quick, your honour!"

And go she did in spite of his honour, and both the loads he sent after her; while the rector laughed so at the captain's plight, that it was quite impossible for him to shoot. The keeper also put on an experienced grin, while Bonny flung open all the cavern of his mouth.

"Run after him, boy! Look alive!" cried the captain. "I defy him to go more than fifty yards. You must all have seen how I peppered him."

"Ay, and salted her too, I believe," said the parson: "look along the barrel of my gun, and you will see the salt still on her tail, eh, Steenie?"

As he pointed, they all saw the gallant hare at a leisurely canter crossing the valley, some quarter of a mile below them.

"What!" cried the rector; "did you see that jump? What can there be to jump over there?" For puss had made a long bound from bank to bank, at a place where they could not see the bottom.

"Water, if 'e plaize, sir," answered Bonny; "a girt strame of water comed down that hollow, all of a sudden this mornint; and it hath been growing stronger ever since."

"Good God!" exclaimed Mr Hales, dropping his gun. "What is the water like, boy?"

"I never seed no water like it afore. As black as what I does your boots with, sir; but as clear—you can see every stone in it."

"Then the Lord have mercy on this poor parish; and especially to

the old house of Lorraine! For the Woeburn has broken out again."

"Why, rector, you seem in a very great fright," said Captain Chapman, recovering slowly from his sad discomfiture. "What is the matter about this water? Some absurd old superstition—is not it?"

"Superstition or not," Mr Hales answered shortly, "I must leave you to shoot by yourself, Captain Chapman. I could not fire another shot to-day. It is more than three hundred and fifty years since this water of death was seen. In my church you may read what happened then. And not only that, but according to tradition, its course runs directly through our village, and even through my garden. My people know nothing about it yet. It may burst upon them quite suddenly. There are many obstructions, no doubt, in its course, and many hollow places to fill up. But before many hours it will reach us. As a question of prudence, I must hasten home. Shot, come to heel this moment!"

"You are right," said the captain; "I shall do the same. Your hospitable board will excuse me to-night. I would much rather not leap the Woeburn in the dark."

With the instinct of a gentleman, he perceived that the rector, under this depression, would prefer to have no guest. Moreover, the clouds were gathering with dark menace over the hill-tops; and he was not the man—if such man there be—to find pleasure in a wet day's shooting.

"No horse has ever yet crossed the Woeburn," Mr Hales replied, as they all turned homeward across the shoulder of the hill; "at least, if the legends about that are true. Though a hare may have leaped it to-day, to-morrow no horse will either swim or leap it."

"Bless my heart! does it rise like that? The sooner we get out of its way, the better. What a pest it will be to you, rector! Why, you never will be able to come to the meet, and our opening day is next Tuesday."

"Steenie," cried the rector, imbibing hope, "it has not struck me in that light before. But it scarcely could ever be the will of the Lord to cut off a parson from his own pack!"

"Oh, don't walk so fast!" shouted Captain Chapman; "one's neck might be broken down a hill like this. Tom, let me lean on your shoulder. Boy, I'll give you sixpence to carry my gun. Tom, take the flints out, that he mayn't shoot me. Here, Uncle Struan, just sit down a minute; a minute can't make any difference, you know."

"That is true," said the rector, who was also out of breath. "Bonny, how far was the black water come? You seem to know all about it."

"Plaize, sir, it seem to be coming down a hill; and the longer I looked, the more water was a-coming."

"You little nincompoop! had it passed your own door yet—your hole, or your cave, or whatever you call it?"

"Plaize sir, it worn't a runnin' towards I at all. It wor makin' a hole in the ground and kickin' a splash up in a fuzzy corner."

"My poor boy, its course is not far from your door; it may be in among your goods, and have drowned your jackass and all, by this time."

Like an arrow from a bow, away went Bonny down the headlong hill, having cast down the captain's gun, and pulled off his red coat to run the faster. The three men left behind clapped their hands to their sides and roared with laughter; at such a pace went the white buckskin breeches, through bramble,

gorse, heather, over rock, sod, and chalk. "What a grand flying shot!" cried the keeper.

"Where the treasure is, there will the heart be," said the rector, as soon as he could speak. "I would give a month's tithes for a good day's rout among that boy's accumulations. He has got the most wonderful things, they say; and he keeps them on shelves, like a temple of idols. What will he do when he gets too big to go in at his own doorway? I am feeding him up with a view to that; and so are my three daughters."

"He must be a thorough young thief," said the captain. "In any other parish, he would be in prison. I scarcely know which is the softer 'Beak'—as we are called—you, or Sir Roland."

"Tom," cried the rector, "run on before us; you are young and active. Inquire where old Nanny Stilgoe lives, at the head of the village, and tell her that the flood is coming upon her; and help her to move her things, poor old soul, if she will let you help her. Tell her I sent you, and perhaps she will, although she is very hard to deal with. She has long been foretelling this break of the bourne; but the prophets are always the last to set their own affairs in order."

The keeper touched his hat, and set off. He always attended to the parson's orders more than his own master's. And Mr Hales saw from the captain's face that he had ordered things too freely.

"Steenie, I beg your pardon," he said; "I forgot for the moment that I should have asked you before I despatched your man like that. But I did it for your own good, because we need no longer hurry."

"Rector, I am infinitely obliged to you. To order those men is so fatiguing. I always want some one to do it for me. And now we

may go down the hill, I suppose, without snapping all our knee-caps. To go up a hill fast is a very bad thing; but to go down fast is a great deal worse, because you think you can do it."

"My dear fellow, you may take your time. I will not walk you off your legs, as that wicked niece of mine did. How are you getting on there now?"

"Well, that is a delicate question, rector. You know what ladies are, you know. But I do not see any reason to despair of calling you 'uncle,' in earnest."

"Have you brought the old lady over to your side? You are sure to be right when that is done."

"She has been on my side all along, for the sake of the land. Ah, how good it is!"

"And nobody else in the field, that we know of. Then Lallie can't hold out so very much longer. Lord bless me! do you see that black line yonder?"

"To be sure! Why, it seems to be moving onward, like a great snake crawling. And it has a white head. What a wonderful thing!"

"It is our first view of the Woe-burn. Would to heaven that it were our last one! The black is the water, and the white, I suppose, is the chalky scum swept before it. It is following the old track, as lava does. It will cross the Coombe road in about five minutes. If you want to get home, you must be quick to horse. Never mind the rain: let us run down the hill or just stop one half-minute."

They were sitting in the shelter of a chalky rock, with the sullen storm rising from the south behind them, and the drops already pattering. On the right hand and on the left, brown ridges, furzy rises, and heathery scollops overhanging slidden rubble, and the steep zig-zags of the sheep, and the rounding away into nothing of the hill-tops,

—all of these were fading into the slaty blue of the rain-cloud. Before them spread for leagues and leagues, clear, and soft, and smiling still, the autumnal beauty of the weald-land. Tufting hamlets here and there, with darker foliage round them, elbows of some distant lane unconsciously prominent, swathes of colour laid on broadly where the crops were all alike; some bold tree of many ages standing on its right to stand; and grey church-towers, far asunder, landmarks of a longer view; in the fading distance many things we cannot yet make out; but hope them to be good and beauteous, calm, and large with human life.

This noble view expanded always the great heart of the rector; and he never failed to point out clearly the boundary-line of his parish. He could scarcely make up his mind to miss that opportunity, even now; and was just beginning with a distant furze-rick, far to the westward under Chancton Ring, when Chapman, having heard it at least seven times, cut him short rather briskly.

"You are forgetting one thing, my dear sir. Your parish is being cut in two, while you are dwelling on the boundaries."

"Steenie, you are right. I had no idea that you had so much sense, my boy. You see how the ditches stand all full of water, so as to confuse me. A guinea for the first at the rectory gate! You ought to be handicapped. You call yourself twenty years younger; don't you?"

"Here's the guinea!" cried Chapman, as the parson set off; "two if you like; only let me come down this confounded hill, considerably."

Mr Hales found nothing yet amiss with his own premises; some people had come to borrow shovels, and wheeling-planks, and suchlike; but the garden looked so fair and dry, with its pleasant slope to the east,

that the master laughed at his own terrors; until he looked into the covered well, the never-failing black-diamond water, down below the tool-house. Here a great cone rose in the middle of the well, like a plume of black ostrich; and the place was alive with hollow noises.

"Dig the celery!" cried the rector. "Every man and boy, come here. I won't have my celery washed away, nor my drumhead savoy, nor my ragged Jack. Girls, come out, every one of you. There is not a moment to lose, I tell you. I never had finer stuff in all my life; and I won't have it all washed away, I tell you. Here, you heavy-breeched Dick, what the dickens are you gaping at? I shan't get a thing done before dark, at this rate. Out of my way, every one of you. If you can't stir your stumps, I can."

With less avail, like consternation seized every family in West Lorraine. A river, of miraculous birth and power, was sweeping down upon all of them. There would never be any dry land any more; all the wise old women had said so. Everybody expected to see black water bubbling up under his bed that night.

Meanwhile this beautiful and grand issue of the gathered hill-springs moved on its way majestically, obeying the laws it was born of. The gale of the previous night had unsealed the chamber of great waters, forcing the needful air into the duct, and opening vaults that stored the rainfall of a hundred hills and vales. Through such a "bower of stalactite, such limpid realms and lakes enlock'd in caves," Cyrene led her weeping son—

"Where all the rivers of the world he found,

In separate channels gliding underground."

And now, as this cold resistless flood calmly reclaimed its ancient

channel, swallowed up Nanny Stilgoe's well, and cut off the rector from his own church; as if to encounter its legendary bane, a poor young fellow, depressed, and shattered, feeble, and wan, and heavy-hearted, was dragging his reluctant steps up the valley of the Adur. Left on the naked rocks of Spain, conquered, plundered, and half starved, Hilary Lorraine had fallen, with the usual reaction of a sanguine temperament, into low spirits and disordered health. So that when he at last made his way to Corunna, and found no British agent there, nor any one to draw supplies from, nothing but the pride of his family kept him from writing to the Count of Zamora. Of writing to England there was no chance. All communication ran through the channels of the distant and victorious army. So that he thought himself very lucky (in the present state of his health and fortunes), when the captain of an oil-ship bound for London, having lost three hands on the outward voyage, allowed him to work his passage. The fare of a landsman in feeble health was worth perhaps more than his services; but the captain was a kind-hearted man, and perceived (though he knew not who Hilary was) that he had that very common thing in those days, a "gent under a cloud" to deal with. And the gale, which had opened the Woeburn, shortened Hilary's track towards it, by forcing his ship to run for refuge into Shoreham harbour.

"How shall I go home? What shall I say? Disgraced, degraded, and broken down, a stain upon my name and race, I am not fit to enter our old doors. What will my father say to me? And proud Alice—what will her thoughts be?"

With steps growing slower at each weary drag, he crossed the bridge of Bramber, and passed beneath the ivied towers of the rivals

of his ancestors, and then avoiding Steyning town, he turned up the valley of West Lorraine. And the rain which had come on at middle-day, and soaked his sailor's slops long ago, now took him on the flank judiciously. And his heart was so low, that he received it all without talking either to himself or it.

"I will go to the rectory first," he thought; "Uncle Struan is violent, but he is warm. And though he has three children of his own, he loves me much more than my father does."

With this resolution, he turned on the right down a lane that came out by the rectory. The lane broke off suddenly into black water; and a tall, robust man stood in the twilight, with a heavy spade over his shoulder. And Hilary Lorraine went up to him.

"No, no, my man; not a penny to spare!" said the rector, in anticipation; "we have a great deal too much to do with our own poor, and with this new trouble especially. The times are hard—yes, they always are; but an honest man always can get good work. Or go and fight for your country, like a man—but we can't have you in this parish."

"I have fought for my country, Uncle Struan; and this is all that has come of it."

"Good God, Hilary!" cried the rector; and for a long time he could say nothing else.

"Yes, Uncle Struan, don't you understand? Every one must have his ups and downs. I am having a long spell of downs just now."

"My dear boy, my dear boy, whatever have you done?"

"Do you mean to throw me over, Uncle Struan, as the rest of the world has beautifully done? Everything seems to be upset. What is

the meaning of this broad black stream?"

"Come into my study, and tell me all. I can let you in without sight of your aunt. The shock would be too great for her."

Hilary followed without a word. Mr Hales led him in at the window, and warmed him, and covered him with his own dressing-gown, and watched him slowly recovering.

"Never mind the tar on your hands; it is an honest smell," he said; "my poor boy, my poor boy, what you must have been through!"

"Whatever has happened to me," answered Hilary, spreading his thin hands to the fire, "has been all of my own doing, Uncle Struan."

"You shall have a cordial; and you shall tell me all. There, I have bolted the door. I am your parson, as well as your uncle. All you say will be sacred with me. And I am sure you have done no great harm after all. We shall see what your dear aunt thinks of it."

Then Hilary, sipping a little rum-and-water, wandered through his story; not telling it brightly, as once he might have done, but hiding nothing consciously.

"Do you mean to tell me there is nothing worse than that?" asked the rector, with a sigh of great relief.

"There is nothing worse, uncle. How could it be worse?"

"And they turned you out of the army for that! How thankful I am for belonging to the Church! You are simply a martyred hero."

"Yes, they turned me out of the army for that. How could they help it?" Reasoning thus he met his uncle's look of pity, and it was too much for him. He did what many a far greater man, and braver hero has done, and will do, when the soul is moving. He burst into a hot flood of tears.

THE ABODE OF SNOW.

HANGRANG, SPITI, AND TIBETAN POLYANDRY.

ON turning north-westward from Chinese Tibet I set myself to the task of traversing the whole line of the Western Himálya, from Lío Porgyúl to Kashmir and the Hindú Kúsh, in the interior of its ranges, at a height usually about 12,000 feet, and through the provinces of Hangrang, Spiti, Lahaul, Zanskar, Súrí, and Dras. About half of this line of journey is not to be found in Montgomerie's Routes, and it involves more than one passage of several days over high and difficult ground, where there are no villages, no houses, and scarcely even any wood. Nevertheless, it commends itself as a summer and autumn journey to the traveller, from its great elevation, which keeps him above the tremendous heat of the gorges—from its singularly pure and bracing air—from the protection which more than one snowy range affords against the Indian monsoon—from the awful sublimity of the scenery—and from the exceedingly primitive and essentially Turanian and Lamaistic character of the people among whom he has to sojourn.

It is possible to lit upon this line of journey without essaying the arduous task of visiting Pú and Shipki, because there is a path from Súngnam to Nako, in Hangrang, by way of Lío and Hango, which, though it goes over the Hangrang Pass at an altitude of 14,530 feet, is comparatively easy. But from Namgea Rizhing or Fields, I had to reach Nako by crossing the Suttlej and passing over a shoulder of the great mountain Lío Porgyúl; so, on the 12th August, we made the steep ascent to the village of Namgea, and from there to a very unpleasant

jhúla which crosses the foaming torrent of the Suttlej. In this part of the Himálya, and, indeed, on to Kashmir, these bridges are constructed of twigs, chiefly from birch-trees or bushes, twisted together. Two thick ropes of these twigs, about the size of a man's thigh, or a little larger, are stretched across the river, at a distance of about six to four feet from each other, and a similar rope runs between them, three or four feet lower, being connected with the upper ropes by more slender ropes, also usually of birch twigs twisted together, but sometimes of grass, and occurring at an interval of about five feet from each other. The unpleasantness of a *jhúla* is that the passenger has no proper hold of the upper ropes, which are too thick and rough to be grasped by the hand; and that, at the extremities, they are so far apart that it is difficult to have any hold of both at the same time; while the danger is increased by the bend or hang of the *jhúla*, which is much lower in the middle than at its ends. He has also to stoop painfully in order to move along it; and it is seldom safe for him to rest his feet on the lower rope, except where it is supported from the upper ropes by the transverse ones. To fall into the raging torrent underneath would be almost certain destruction. The high wind which usually prevails in the Himálya during the day, makes the whole structure swing about frightfully. In the middle of the bridge there is a cross-bar of wood (to keep the two upper ropes separate) which has to be stepped over; and it is not customary to repair a *jhúla* until

some one falls through it, and so gives practical demonstration that it is in rather a rotten state. One of these bridges—at Kokser on the Chandra river, but now superseded by a wooden bridge—may have accelerated the death of Lord Elgin on his way up to Dharamsala. When crossing over it his coat was caught on the birch twigs; and his progress being thus arrested, he was unable to go over it with that continuous, but not too rapid motion, which is the safest way of dealing with such a passage. To delay on a bridge of this kind, swinging in the wind, is trying to the strongest nerves; and I know, on excellent authority, that the position in which he was thus placed had probably some effect in aggravating the heart disease from which this Governor-General died not many days afterwards.

This bridge below Namgea, which is over 100 feet in length, is a particularly bad one, because there is so little traffic over it that it is almost never repaired; and Mr Pagell told me that the Namgea people were at some loss to know how I was to be got across in my weak and disabled state. A discussion arose amongst them as to whether the *jhulla* would bear the weight of one or two men to assist me over it, on hearing of which I could not help laughing quietly, because, however unfit for prolonged muscular exertion, any short dangerous piece of work was just what I liked. Accordingly, to the wonder and admiration of the mountaineers, who could not distinguish between incapacity for walking up 6000 feet and weakness of nerve, I took the *jhulla* whenever I came to it, without stopping to think of it, or looking either to the right or the left until I found myself safe on the rocks on the other side. Silas followed my example, and, with his lithe Marátha frame, got over it in

splendid style; but the heavy Chota Khan nearly stuck in the middle, at the cross-bar, and reached *terra firma* in a state of great agitation. Among the people who carried our things, there was the comely wife of a zemindar, who came with us for a curious reason. Two of her servants had been detailed off to take part in the carriage of our effects, and it occurred to this buxom dame that it would not do to let her servants go and receive money on their own account; so she came also, and carried a mere nominal burden, having been over with us at Shipki. A sentimental and perfectly virtuous friendship had sprung up between this lady and my Afghan cook; and Chota Khan's admiration of her reached the culminating point when he saw his fat friend cross and recross the *jhulla* without the least hesitation or trepidation. All our baggage got across safely, which cannot be calculated upon at this particular bridge, and nobody fell through, though such a result did not appear at all unlikely from the rotten state of the birch ropes. I have gone over worse *jhullas* than this; but it was my first, and impressed me with a feeling that the fewer we met with on our way the better. Any bridge, however, and even the hair-like bridge of Chinavd itself, with hell flaming beneath, would have been welcome to me at this time, so long as it took me across the Sutlej, and away from its furnace-like valley. I experienced an intense feeling of relief on finding that I had no more Sutlej, but only the long line of the Western Himaliya before me. It may appear very absurd to hate a river, and regard it as a personal enemy and special agent of the powers of evil; but that was the frame of mind into which I had got as regards this stream. "Go to," I said, "you uneasy,

yellowish-white, foaming, thundering river. Go and choke yourself in the sands of the Panjáb. You may be called *Langchhenkhabad*, and be fed by the mouths of elephants or demons; you may be richly laden with gold-dust, and may worm your way into the bowels of the earth, until, in sunless caverns, you pollute the waters of Alph, the sacred river; but you shall have none of my dust to grind against the walls of your rock-prison."

In order to reach Nako, where Mr Pagell was to part from me, we had to cross Lío Porgyúl at a height of about 14,000 feet, the lower path having become impassable; but that could not be done in a day, so we camped at a very charming spot called Gyumúr, on the Sotlej side of the great mountain, at the height of about 11,500 feet. This was a place corresponding to Namgea and Shipki Pizhing, having a few terraced fields, and also a few huts; but it was more level than these other outlying stations, and had willow-trees with rills of pure water running through meads of soft, thick, green grass. A spot like this has a peculiar charm after days of barren rock, and it was all the more pleasant because Lío Porgyúl shaded the sun from off us by 3 P.M., and left a long, cool, pleasant afternoon. Mr Pagell's convert, whose father had been hereditary executioner at Kunáwar, came out very great on this occasion. All along he had shown a disposition to talk without measure, and without much regard as to whether any one was listening to him or not. It seemed as if having been denied the privilege of cutting off human heads, and so stopping human breath, he had a special claim to use his own throat and his own breath to an unlimited extent. Mr Pagell, with his kind and philosophical view of

human frailty, excused his follower on the ground that it was the man's nature so to act; and clearly it was so. If the Hereditary Executioner had somewhat restrained his conversational powers at Shipki, as a place where there was some danger of conversation being cut short by the removal of the conversing head, he fully made up for the deprivation at Gyumúr. He talked, without ceasing, to his Moravian brother and to me, to my servants, to the Namgea *bigarries*, to the willow-trees, to the rills, to the huts, and to the stones. It did not in the least matter that no one understood much of what he said, for his dialect of Lower Kunáwar was not rendered more intelligible to the people about him by the mispronounced Tibetan words which he mixed up with it out of his bronchial tubes. That was a matter of no consequence to the Hereditary Executioner, who talked without waiting for replies, and did us excellent service all the while; but I could not help thinking that a few days more of him might have produced a strong temptation to exercise his own hereditary art upon his own person.

Close to Gyumúr there is the monastery of Tashigong, which affords a very secluded position for Lamas of a retiring and contemplative turn of mind as all Lamas ought to be. We were indebted to them for yaks, or rather zo-pos, but had hardly any communication with them, and they did not seem disposed to cultivate our acquaintance. They have a beautifully secluded position for a monastery, among the precipices of a mountain which no one dreams of ascending, and away from villages and trade-routes. This tendency of Buddhists to seclude themselves from the world, has interfered with Buddhism being a great power in the

world. Even in China, where the numerous and well-built monasteries, with large gardens and plantations attached, sufficiently prove that Búdhism must, at one time, have had a great attraction for the black-haired race,—this religion has long ceased to be an important element in the national life. It is forced to give way even before such a religion as Hinduism, and a negative positivism such as Confucianism, whenever mankind reaches a certain stage of complicated social arrangements, or, as we call it, civilisation; but there is a stage before that, though after the period of tribal fighting, when a religion like Búdhism naturally flourishes. Now Tibet is still in that position at the present day, and so Búdhism (in the shape of Lamaism) is still supreme in it, though it has almost entirely disappeared from India, and has so little power in China.

Starting about four in the morning, as was our wont, we had a very pleasant journey over the mountain to Nako. There were some vestiges of a path. The ascent was so steep, that great part of the way it looked as if the mountains were overhanging us, and some small stone avalanches came down uncomfortably near; but that was the character only of the first section. On reaching the highest part of the mountain which we attained—a height of nearly 14,000 feet—we found ourselves on the turn of its ridge, and wound for some way along the top of terrific precipices, which rose up almost perpendicularly to the height of about 5000 feet above the river Lee. It is more interesting, and a great deal more pleasant, being at the top of this gorge than at the bottom of it, where there is no path; and the largest pieces of rock we could roll over were dissipated into fragments, too small to be seen

by us, long before they reached the river.

At Nako we camped close to the village, on the grassy bank of a small lake. The other side of this lake was lined with large poplar and willow trees, and in so desolate a region the place appeared exceedingly beautiful. Elsewhere it might not have appeared so striking; but there is nothing like slow difficult travelling and tent-life, or camping out, for enabling one to appreciate the scenery. I particularly felt this to be the case in the upper parts of Kashmir, where not only the scene of each night's encampment, but even every turn of the beautiful wooded valleys, was deeply impressed upon my memory. Nako is a little over 12,000 feet high; and though I had already slept at higher altitudes on the Kúng-ma Pass, the weather had become colder, and I here, for the first time, experienced a sensation which the head of the Yarkund expedition had warned me not to be afraid of. It consisted in being suddenly awakened at night by an overpowering feeling of suffocation and faintness, which one unaccustomed to it, or not warned about it, might readily mistake for the immediate approach of death. It is a very curious feeling—just as if the spirit were about to flit from the body; but a few more days of travelling along the line of 12,000 feet enabled me to get rid of it altogether.

At Nako we stayed two nights, and must have been in much need of a rest, for we enjoyed our stay there immensely in spite of the exceedingly inclement weather. It is in an almost rainless district, but it is occasionally visited by rain or snow, and we happened to hit on the time of one of these storms. Soon after our arrival about mid-day the thermometer sank to 50°, and next morning was at 47°, and

rain fell, or chill raw mists swept over us. Occasionally the clouds would clear away, showing the mountain above us white with new-fallen snow down to within a few hundred feet of our tent; and this sort of weather continued during the period of our stay at this highly elevated village. At night it was intensely cold; the wind carried the rain into our frail abodes wherever it could find admission; and though the canvas of our tents did not admit the wet exactly, yet it was in a very damp state, which added to the coolness of the interior. Nevertheless we felt quite at home, and our servants also enjoyed themselves much. They amused themselves with various athletic games; and, to my astonishment, I found Silas, who had spent all his life within the tropics, swimming across the lake, which was a most dangerous thing to do, owing to the almost icy coldness of the water and the number of tangled weeds which it contained. This, and our general cheerfulness, said a great deal for the beneficial effects of high mountain air, and of a nourishing diet of milk, mutton, game, and wheat or barley flour, so superior to the rice, curries, vegetables, and pulse, with which the people of India delight to stuff themselves. The piles of *chuppatties*, or girdle-cakes, which my servants baked for themselves, were enormous; so were their draughts of milk; and I supplied them with a great deal of mutton, which they did not undervalue. The people of all the Tibetan-speaking countries also eat enormously. They always had something before starting, however early the hour might be; and whenever we halted for a little on the way, they took out their *sutthi*, or roasted barley flour, and if there happened to be any water accessible, kneaded this flour into large balls about the size

of a cricket-ball, and so ate it with great gusto. On halting for the day, which was most usually about three in the afternoon; while the men assisted us in pitching the tents and making other arrangements, the women immediately fell to work in making *chuppatties* and preparing great pots of tea-broth, into which they put salt, butter, flour, sometimes even meat, and, in fact, almost anything eatable which turned up. After they had done with us, the whole of their afternoons and evenings appeared to be spent in eating and supping, varied occasionally by singing or a wild dance. Sometimes they prolonged their feasting late into the night; and it was a mystery to me where all the flesh they consumed came from, until I observed that the *Himāliya* are very rich in the carcasses of sheep and goats which have been killed by exposure or by falling rocks. All this eating enables the Tibetans to carry enormous burdens, and to make long marches up and down their terrible mountains. Among the rice-eating Kashmirians I observed that large-bodied, strong enough looking young men were grievously oppressed, and soon knocked up, by burdens which Tibetan women could have carried gaily along far more difficult paths, and which their husbands would have thought nothing of. But even in Tibet the heaviest burden did not always go to the strongest bearer. A very common way was for my *bigarries* to engage in a game of chance the night before starting, and so settle the order of selecting packages. Occasionally the strongest men used their strength in order to reserve for themselves the lightest burdens. I noticed also, as an invariable rule, that the worst carriers, those who had the most need of husbanding their breath, were always the most

talkative and querulous, while the best were either silent or indulged only in brief occasional exclamations.

The houses I had met with hitherto had all slated roofs; but at Nako, as all through Spiti, and also in Zanskar, thorn bushes were thickly piled on the roofs, and in some cases actually constituted the only roofs there were except beams. This is done to preserve the wood below, and it probably does, from the effects of the sun in so dry a climate; it must also assist in keeping out the cold; but it gives the houses a peculiar fuzzy look, and denies the people the great privilege of using the top of the house beneath their own as an addendum to their own abode. I purchased at this village a pretty large shaggy white dog, of a breed which is common all over China. We called it Nako, or the Nakowallah, after the place of its birth; and never did poor animal show such attachment to its native village. It could only be managed for some days by a long stick which was fastened to its collar, as it did not do to let it come into close contact with us because of its teeth. In this vile durance, and even after it had got accustomed to us, and could be led by a chain, it was continually sighing, whining, howling, growling, and looking piteously in the direction in which it supposed its birth-place to be. Even when we were hundreds of miles away from Nako, it no sooner found its chain loose than it immediately turned on its footsteps and made along the path we had just traversed, being apparently under the impression that it was only a day's journey from its beloved village. It had the utmost dread of running water, and had to be carried or forced across all bridges and fords. No dog, of whatever

size, could stand against it in fight, for our Chinese friend had peculiar tactics of its own which took its opponents completely by surprise. When it saw another dog, and was unchained, it immediately rushed straight at the other dog, butted it over and seized it by the throat or some equally tender place before the enemy could gather itself together. Yet Nako became a most affectionate animal, and was an admirable watch. It never uttered a sound at night when any stranger came near it, but quietly pinned him by the calf of the leg, and held on there in silence until some one it could trust came to the relief. The Nakowallah was a most curious mixture of simplicity, ferocity, and affectionateness. I left him with a lady at Peshawar, to whose little girls he took at once, in a gentle and playful manner; but when I said "Good-bye, Nako," he divined at once that I was going to desert him; he leaped on his chain and howled and wailed. I should not at all wonder if a good many dogs were to be met with in heaven, while as many human beings were made to reappear as pariahs on the plains of India.

Above Nako there is a small Lama monastery, and all the way up to it—a height of about 600 feet—there are terraced fields in which are grown wheat, barley, a kind of turnip, and pulse. Thus the cultivation rises here to almost 13,000 feet, and the crops are said to be very good indeed. There is some nearly level pasture-ground about the place, and yaks and ponies are bred in it for the trade into Chinese Tibet. The people are all Tibetans, and distinctly Tartar in feature. They are called Dúkpas, and seem to be of rather a religious turn. Accordingly, they had recently been favoured by the re-incarnation, in a boy of their village, of the Teshú

Lama, who resides at Teshú Lambu, the capital of Western Tibet, and who, in the Lama hierarchy, is second only to the Dalai or Grand Lama.

At Nako I bade farewell to my kind friend Mr Pagell, to whom I had been so much indebted. On all the rest of my journey I was accompanied only by my native servants and by porters of the country, and only twice, shortly after parting with the Moravian, did I meet European travellers. These were two Indian officers who were crossing from Ladak to the Sutlej valley; and another officer, a captain from Gwalior, who had gone into Spiti by the Babah route, and whom I passed a few hours after parting with Mr Pagell. My first day's journey to Chango was easy, over tolerably level ground, which seldom required me to dismount from my zo-po, and on a gentle level, descending about 2000 feet to Chango. That place has a large extent of cultivated nearly level ground, and it may be called the capital of Hangrang, a province which formerly belonged to China, and of which the other large villages are Nako, Hango, and Lío. The whole population of this little province numbers only about 3000 souls, and they seem to be terribly hard worked in autumn; but then during long months of the year they have little to do except to enjoy themselves. In the afternoon two bands of wandering Spiti minstrels made their appearance, and performed before my tent. The attraction of the larger of them was a handsome woman (two of whose husbands were among the minstrels—there being more at home) who danced and sang after the manner of Indian nautch girls, but with more vigour and less impropriety. The senior husband of this lady ingeniously remarked that I could not think of giving him less than a rupee, as he

was going to sing my praise over the whole country-side.

On the next two days I had the first and shortest of those stretches over ground without villages and houses to which I have already alluded; and my route took me again, for a day's journey and a night's encampment, into the inhospitable region of Chinese Tibet, but into a section of that country where I saw no Tartar young women or human inhabitants of any kind. From Chango a path leads into Spiti across the river Lee, by the fort of Shealkar, over the Lepcha Pass and along the right bank of the Lee; but that route is said to be extremely difficult, and I selected a path (which surely cannot possibly be much better) that takes northward up the left side of the Lee, but at some distance from it, into the Chinese province of Chúmúrti, and, after a day's journey there, crosses the boundary of Spiti, and continues, still on the same bank of the river, on to Dankar, the capital of Spiti.

A long steep ascent from Chango took me again on to the priceless 12,000 and 13,000 feet level. The early morning was most delicious, being clear and bright, without wind, and exhilarating in the highest degree, while nothing could be more striking than the lighting up by the sun of the snowy peaks around. One starts on these early mountain journeys in great spirits, after drinking about a quart of fresh milk; but after three or four hours, when the rays of the sun have begun to make themselves felt, and there has been a certain amount of going down into perpendicular gorges and climbing painfully up the other side of them, our spirits begin to flag, and, unless there has been a long rest and a good breakfast in the middle of the day, feelings of exasperation are in the ascendant before the camping-ground is reached. Early on this

day's journey I met the finest Tibetan mastiff which I saw in all the Himāliya. It was a sheep-dog, of a dark colour, and much longer and larger than any of the ferocious guardians of Shipki. While we were talking to the shepherd who owned it, this magnificent creature sat watching us, growling and showing its teeth, evidently ready to fly at our throats at a moment's notice; but whenever I spoke of purchase, it at once put a mile of hill between us, and no calls of its master would induce it to come back. It seemed at once to understand that it was being bargained for, and so took steps to preserve its own liberty; but it need not have been so alarmed, for the shepherd refused to part with it on any terms.

After passing the Chaddaldok Po by a narrow slated wooden bridge, we reached the top of the left bank of the To-tzo or Para river, which divides Hangrang from Chinese Tibet. The descent to the stream is about 1500 feet, and a short way down there are some hot springs, with grass and willow-trees round them, and the shelter of great rocks. This would be by far the best place for camping; but, for some reason or other, the Chango people had determined that we should do so on the Chinese side of the river. On getting down there, with some difficulty, and crossing the *sangpa*, I found there was no protection whatever from the sun's rays, which beat into the valley fiercely, and were reflected, in an overpowering manner, from the white stones and rocks around, while the noise of the furious river was quite deafening. Here I had to remain without shelter and without food for nearly three hours, getting more and more exasperated as time passed on. After this, I usually kept two coolies within reach of me, with sufficient supplies to meet any emergency, and clothing sufficient to enable me to camp

out if necessary; but I had now to learn the wisdom of such an arrangement. My servants had not got on well with the Chango people, and the latter had left us only a little way before we reached this river, under pretence of taking a short cut. I could not feel that the former were properly in my hands until I got past Dankar, for they might invent some scheme for forcing me to go down from that place to the Sutlej valley, through the Babah Pass. As to the Chango *bigarries*, I could not say what their motive might be for delay; but it was clear to me, now that I was alone, that it would be necessary to check this sort of thing at the outset, and I felt a certain advantage for doing so in being upon Chinese ground. So, when the parties did come in at last, I made my wrath appear to be even greater than it was; and, seeing that one of them was a *shikar*, and had a matchlock-gun and a hunting-knife with him, I thought there could be nothing cowardly in making an example of him, so I fell upon him, and frightened one or two more. This was what the French call a necessary act, and it by no means interfered with the friendly terms on which I always stood with my coolies; but I need scarcely say that such things should not be encouraged, and that everything depends upon why and how they are done. No formal rules can touch this subject effectually. Some men will travel through a country without being guilty of an act of violence, or even of uttering an angry word, and yet they leave behind a feeling of bitter hatred not only towards themselves but also towards the race and government to which they belong. Other men produce similar results by unnecessary, stupid, and cowardly acts of violence. It is curious that sometimes a Briton, who is so wildly benevolent in theory towards

weak and uncivilised races, no sooner finds himself among them than he tramples on their toes unmercifully, and is ready to treat them in a ruthless manner. Therefore I must guard against the supposition that I go in for violent treatment in any part of the world, though just as little do I hold that it should be entirely avoided in all circumstances. It is the touch of nature that makes the whole world kin, which is the best recommendation of the traveller. An English officer, a great *shikar*, writing to me from the wilds to the north of Kashmir, mentions that the people of one village (who had been in Kashmir, and had noticed the ways of English officers there) begged him, in the name of God, not to make a map of the country; and on his asking them the reason why, their reply was: "We do not mind you coming here, because you talk to us and let us sit down by you; but other officers will say to us, 'D—n you, go away.'" This often arises simply from fatigue; but for a traveller to neglect to make friends of the people among whom he sojourns, causes far more dislike to him than any positive acts of violence he is likely to commit; and such is specially the case in high mountainous countries, where the population is scanty and travellers are rare, and the people—however poor some of them may be, and however dirty all are—have much natural though not formal politeness, and are free from the rude presumption which has become one of the distinguishing characteristics of the lower classes of this country of late years. Englishmen are far from being the most unconciliatory of travellers, and they would be better liked in India if the Indians had more experience of the harshness of the ordinary German, and the ignorant insolence of the ordinary French, traveller.

At this point I finally left the dominions of the Rajah of Bussahir, which include upper and lower Kunáwar and the Tartar province of Hangrang. Everywhere there, except to a slight extent at Chango, the people had been exceedingly civil and pleasant, and had readily furnished me with all the carriage I required, though they must often have done so at great inconvenience to themselves, owing to the harvest operations which were going on. In lower Kunáwar they seemed to be a gentle and rather timid people, speaking an Aryan language; and though the Tartars of the upper portion of Bussahir were of rougher and stronger character, yet they were quiet and friendly enough. As to the roads of these provinces, they are exactly in the same state as when Gerard traversed them, and I prefer to quote here his account of them rather than to give any more descriptions of my own. "The roads in general," he says, "consist of narrow footpaths skirting precipices, with often here and there rocks, that would seem to come down with a puff of wind, projecting over the head; to avoid which it is necessary sometimes to bend yourself double. The way often leads over smooth stones steeply inclined to a frightful abyss, with small niches cut or worn, barely sufficient to admit the point of the foot; or it lies upon heaps of gigantic angular fragments of granite or gneiss, almost piercing the shoes, and piled upon one another in the most horrid disorder. Where the rocks are constantly hurled from above there is not the slightest trace of a path, and cairns of stones are erected within sight of each other, to guide the traveller. There are often deep chasms between the rocks, and it requires a considerable degree of agility to clear them, and no small degree of caution to avoid overturning the

stones, which now and then shake under you. . . . The most difficult part I saw was where ropes were used to raise and lower the baggage; and this did not arise from the path having given way. Now and then flights of stone steps occur, notched trees and spars from rock to rock, rude scaffolding along the perpendicular face of a mountain, formed of horizontal stakes driven into the crevices, with boards above, and the outer ends resting on trees or slanting posts projecting from the clefts of the rock below. The most extraordinary one of this kind I ever saw was in the valley of Teedong. It is called Rapua, and the scaffolding continued for 150 feet. It was constructed like the other, with this difference, that six posts were driven horizontally into the cracks of the rocks, and secured by a great many wedges; there was no support on the outer side, and the river, which undermined it, rushed with incredible fury and a clamorous uproar beneath. The shaking of the scaffolding, together with the stupefying noise of the torrent, combined to give the traveller an uncertain idea of his safety.* To this it may be added that though several bridges—*sangpas* such as the one beneath Pú, which I have already described—have been built of late in Kunáwar, almost every path of that province is crossed by unbridged mountain torrents, which are by no means easy to pass in summer during the day, when they are swollen by the melting snows and glaciers above. Bungalows for Europeans are to be found only on the Hindústhan and Tibet road; and as the people, being affected by Hindú caste notions, will not allow a European to occupy their houses,

a tent is necessary for making much acquaintance with this most mountainous and formidable country.

Camped as we were on the Chinese side of the To-tzo river, we might have had a marauding visit from some of the nomad Tartars, dwellers in tents, who are the chief inhabitants of the province of Chúmúrti; but, I fancy, the Lassa Government would be as opposed to any unnecessary interference with Englishmen as it is to admitting them into Chinese Tibet, because such interference might be made a handle of by the Indian Government. There is another door here at To-tzo into the dominions of the Grand Lama; but Mr Pagell had told me that he had already tried it, and that on reaching the first village he was sent back immediately, without any ceremony, and was scarcely allowed time to feed his yak or pony. It would, no doubt, be as difficult to communicate with the Tzong-pon of Chúmúrti as with the Tzong-pon of D'zabrug, and the Changó people would only go along the path to Spiti. Since publishing my former remarks on the exclusiveness of the Tibetans, I have noticed that Turner† makes mention of a very probable origin of it. He ascribes it not to any dislike to Europeans, but to "that spirit of conquest which forms the common character of all Mohammedan states, and that hostility which their religion enjoins against all who are not its professors." He, indeed, refers more particularly to this cause as having led the people of Bhotan to close the southern entrances to their mountainous country; but it is extremely likely that it may have been more generally operative, and induced the Tibetans to seclude the

* Account of Koonawur, &c., &c., by the late Capt. Alexander Gerard. Edited by George Lloyd. London, 1841.

† An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama, in Tibet. By Captain Samuel Turner. London, 1806.

whole dominions of the Grand Lama, while their dread of Europeans and of the gold-mines being coveted, might still have acted afterwards to the same end. In the close of last century there seems to have been no unwillingness on the part of the Lama Government to enter into relationships with British India; for first Mr George Bogle in 1774, and then Captain Turner in 1783, were allowed to visit Teshú Lambu as representatives of our Government. A paragraph appeared in the 'Times,' a few days ago, intimating that Mr Bogle's MS. journal of his mission to Lassa had been discovered lately in the British Museum, and is to be published by the Indian Government, along with an account of the trade-routes into Tibet. There must surely, however, be some mistake here; because, though Turner gives some account of his predecessor's mission, he makes no mention whatever of Bogle having gone to Lassa, but only to Teshú Lambu and the Bogda Lama. Turner's own journal gives a very full account of that route and of that part of the country; but Mr Bogle's journal will be welcome. Though it contains no geographical information, yet I am informed it gives long reports of the envoy's conversations with the Tibetan authorities; and it is gratifying to find that the Indian Government is again turning its thoughts to Chinese Tibet after the long time which has elapsed since 1783. A formal mission might be sent to Lassa; or, under the treaty of Tien-tsin, passports might be claimed from the Chinese Foreign Office, allowing Englishmen, in a private or in a semi-official capacity, to traverse Chinese Tibet, the passports being either in the language of the country or accompanied by Tib-

etan translations given under imperial authority. As it is, the do-nothing policy of the Indian Government recoils injuriously upon its prestige with its own subjects. It hurts our position in India for the people there to know that there is a country adjoining our own territory into which Englishmen are systematically refused entrance, while the nations of British India and of its tributary states are allowed to enter freely, and even to settle in large numbers at the capital, Lassa,* as the Kashmiris do. About a year and a half ago the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce addressed the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India, complaining of the restrictions there were in the way of commerce with Tibet, and received answers which seemed to imply that their prayer would be taken into favourable consideration whenever circumstances would allow. More recently the 'Friend of India' well remarked that "the day has now come when we may justly ask the Chinese Emperor to take steps for our admittance into Tibet." Certainly the matter might well be brought to a crisis now; and there would not have been the least difficulty about it if a more active use had been made, within the last few years, of our position in China.

The path to Lari, the first village in Spiti, where we camped under a solitary apricot-tree, said to be the only tree of the kind in the whole province, was very fatiguing, because large portions of it could not be ridden over; and there were some ticklish faces of smooth, sloping rock to be crossed, which a yak could hardly have got over, but which were managed, when riderless, in a wonderful manner by the shoeless *ghünt*, or mountain pony, which I

* In Western Tibet the name of this city is pronounced without an aspirate; but in the centre and east of the country it is called "Lhasa," which, consequently, is the correct way.

had got at Chango. The scenery was wild and desolate rather than striking—no house, no tree, and hardly even a bush being visible. There was a great deal of limestone-rock on this journey; and at some places it was of such a character that it might be called marble. We passed several open caverns; and in one of these, about a third of the way from the To-tzo river, I stopped for breakfast. It was a magnificent open arch, about fifty feet high in front, and as many in breadth, in the face of a precipice, and afforded cool shade until after mid-day, when the declining sun began to beat into it. But the Karitha river, which occurs immediately after, ought to be passed in the morning, because there is only a two-poled bridge over it, on which even a *ghémt* cannot cross; and the stream was so swollen at mid-day by the melting snow that my pony was nearly lost.

The next morning I was delayed at Lari by the information that messengers had arrived at the other side of the river with a letter for me and some money, but were unable to cross the river, a *jhúla*, which formerly existed there, having given way. This seemed exceedingly improbable, but I went down to inquire. There was a double rope across the stream, and I told the messengers to fasten the letter to it, and so send that across, but to keep the money, and found that both were for the Gwalior captain whom I met near Nako, so I ordered the bearers to proceed to Pú in search of him. Where there is no bridge exactly, there is often a double rope of this kind across the deep-sunk rivers of the Himáliya, to enable the villagers on opposite sides of the gorge to communicate with each other; and the rope is sometimes strong enough to allow of a man being slung to it, and so worked across. If only the rope be sound, which cannot always

be depended on, this method of progression is preferable to the *jhúla*; because, though it may try the nerves, it does not at the same time call for painful exertion which disturbs the heart's action.

Po, or Poi, my next camping-place, was a very pleasant village, with little streams running between willow-trees, and with peaks and walls of snow rising over the precipices, and immense steep slopes of shingle immediately around. Another day took me to Dankar, under immense dark precipices, which lined both banks of the river, of slate and shale. It would be well for a practical geologist to examine that part of the Spiti valley, and also the portion between Po and Lari; for it is possible they may contain coal. For the most part the way to Dankar was tolerably level and good; but the height of the water of the Lee at this season compelled us to make a difficult detour through probably the most extraordinary series of gorges there is in the world. We moved along a dry water-course, between perpendicular tertiary or alluvial strata rising to hundreds and even to thousands of feet above. The floor of these clefts was fifteen or twenty feet broad, and though they must have enlarged considerably at the top, they appeared to do so very little to the eye. It was not rock but soft deposits which rose on both sides of us; and though there had been every irregularity in the lateral effects of the water, which had cut out the passages in many directions, there had been very little in its perpendicular action, for, in that respect, the water had cut almost straight down. High up, at the edges of these extraordinary ravines, the strata had been worn away so as to form towers, spires, turrets, and all sorts of fantastic shapes, which could be seen by

looking up the cross passages and at the turnings. Often high above, and apparently ready to fall at any moment, a huge rock was supported on a long tower or spire of earth and gravel, which (being a little harder than the strata around, or having possibly been compressed by the weight of the rock) had remained standing, while the earth round it had crumbled or been washed away. These threatening phenomena were either on the edge of the clefts or rose up from their sides, and were very similar to the rocks which are to be seen on glaciers supported on pillars of ice. The way was most tortuous, and led into a *cul-de-sac*, the end of which we had to ascend with difficulty. As the route I speak of involves a considerable detour and some climbing, no traveller will be taken through it if the path along the side of the Lee be not covered with water; and I cannot conscientiously recommend every one to go into the labyrinth. True, it is used by the mountaineers when the other path is not passable; but they are very rarely obliged to have recourse to it, because they can time their journey so as to make the passage of the river when the snows above are frozen up, and consequently the water is low. True, also, no rocks fell during our passage, but the floor was paved with them; there were hundreds of rocks which a mere touch would have sent down, and I saw evidence enough to prove that whole sides of the ravines sometimes give way; so that, unless the traveller had a charmed life, his curiosity would expose him to a very fair chance of being suddenly knocked on the head by a stone a ton weight, or buried under hundreds of feet of tertiary strata.

It is similar strata which afford so extraordinary a position and appearance to Dankar, the capital of

Spiti, which is a British Himálayan province, under an assistant commissioner who resides in the warmer and more fruitful Kúlú valley. This town is perched about a thousand feet above the Lee, on the ledges and towers of an immense ridge of soft strata which descends towards the river, but breaks off with a sudden fall after affording ground for the fort, houses, and Lama temples of Dankar. Its appearance is so extraordinary, that I shall not attempt any description of it until able to present my readers with a copy of its photograph. It has only its picturesqueness, however, to recommend it, for the interior is as miserable as that of the smallest Himálayan village; and the people, being under British rule, have of course a proper contempt for British travellers though so little troubled by them. No one offered to show us where to pitch our tents, or to render any other civility. The *múkea* was away, and his representative was both insolent and exorbitant in his demands. Here was the style which he adopted, and was supported in by the people about him. As was afterwards proved by my making him produce his *nerrick*, or official list of prices, he began by demanding double price from us for the sheep and grain we wanted; and when we said quite civilly that he was charging too much, he at once answered impudently, and without the least excuse for doing so—"Oh! if you want to use force, by all means take what you want for nothing, and I shall report the matter to the commissioner in Kúlú." Fortunately for him there was no Chinese territory near; but, through the medium of the young schoolmaster of Dankar, who understood Hindústhani, I made him and his friends somewhat ashamed of his conduct; and it was the more

inexcusable because the prices of the *nerrick* are fixed at a higher rate than those which prevail, in order that there may be no hardship in affording travellers the right of purchasing supplies—a right which it is absolutely necessary that they should have, in order to travel at all, in a district of country where there are so few open markets.

I have referred more than once in these articles to the polyandry of the people among whom I sojourned; and though this delicate subject has been alluded to in several publications, it is sufficiently novel to the general reader to call for a little explanation here. Indeed, I find there are many well-educated persons who do not even know what polyandry means. It has a very botanical kind of sound; and its German equivalent *Vielmännerei*, though coarse and expressive, does not throw much light upon the subject. A mistake also has been made in contrasting polyandry with polygamy; whereas, being the marriage of one woman with two or more men, it is itself a form of polygamy, and ought properly to be contrasted with polygamy, or the marriage of one man to two or more women. But the polyandry of Central Asia must further be limited to the marriage of one woman to two or more brothers, for no other form is found there, so far as I could learn.

This curious and revolting custom exists all over the country of the Tibetan-speaking people; that is to say, from China to the dependencies of Kashmir and Afghanistan, with the exception of Sikkim, and some other of the provinces on the Indian side of the Himāliya, where, though

the Tibetan language may in part prevail, yet the people are either Aryan in race, or have been much influenced by Aryan ideas. I found polyandry to exist commonly from Taranda, in the Sutlej valley, a few marches from Simla, up to Chinese Tibet, and from there to Šūrī, where it disappeared in the polygamy of the Mohammedan Kashmiris. But it is well known to exist, and to be an almost universal custom, all through Chinese Tibet, Little Tibet, and nearly all the Tibetan-speaking provinces. It is not confined to that region, however, and is probably the common marriage custom of at least thirty millions of respectable people. It is quite unnecessary to go deeply into the origin and working of this very peculiar marital arrangement; but it is well worthy of notice, as showing how purely artificial a character such arrangements may assume, and what desperate means are had recourse to, in order to get rid of the pressure caused by the acknowledged law of population.

In the most elaborate and valuable compilation there is on Lamaism—‘Die Lamaische Hierarchie und Kirche,’ by Carl Friedrich Koepen—that author, in his brief reference to this subject, clears the religion of Tibet of any responsibility for polyandry, and asserts that it existed in the country before the introduction of Búdhistism, having arisen from the pressure of population.* In Ceylon, which is a great Búdhist country, polyandry also exists, and, at least till very lately, has been legally acknowledged by the British Government; but I have not found anything which proves that the religion of the Singalese

* “Die Schuld dieser widrigen und unnatürlichen Einrichtung trägt übrigens keinesweges der Lamaismus; der Gebrauch bestand vielmehr bei den *Bodpa* längst vor ihrer Bekanntschaft mit der Religion des Šhákjasohnes und findet seine Erklärung und Entschuldigung in der übergrossen Armuth des Schneelandes und in der aus dieser entspringenden Nothwendigkeit, dem Anwachsen der Bevölkerung Schranken zu setzen.”

is any more responsible for the custom than is the British Government itself. We know also that polyandry has existed in non-Buddhistic countries, and even in Great Britain, along with worse marriage customs, as Cæsar testifies in his 'De Bello Gallico' (lib. v. xiv.), when he says: "Uxores habent deni duodenique inter se communes, et maxime, fratres cum fratribus, et parentes cum liberis." Traces are to be found of it among the ancient Indo-Aryans, as in the Mahabárat, where Dranpadi is represented as married to the five sons of Pandu; and in the Rámáyana, where the giant Viradha attacks the two divine brothers Rámá and Lakshaman, and their wife Sita, saying, "Why do you two devotees remain with one woman? Why do you, O profligate wretches, thus corrupting the devout sages?" Even so early as in the Rig Veda Sanhita (Mandala I. Hymn 117, v. 5) there is some trace of the custom in the passage, "Aswins, your admirable (horses) bore the car which you had harnessed (first) to the goal, for the sake of honour; and the damsel who was the prize came through affection to you and acknowledged your husbandship, saying, 'you are (my) lords.'" I think polyandry of a kind is even sanctioned in the laws of Menu.

There are many other traces of the existence of polyandry in the ancient world, and it also appears in various countries in our own or in very recent times. As to the Singalese, Sir Emerson Tennent says that "polyandry prevails throughout the interior of Ceylon, chiefly amongst the wealthier classes. . . . As a general rule, the husbands are members of the same family, and most frequently brothers." Here there is a slight difference from the polyandry where the husbands are always brothers. The Abbé Des-

godins speaks of *proches parents*, or near relatives in general, being joined in this relationship, as well as brothers, in the east of the country; but I repeatedly inquired into that point, and on consulting Herr Jaeschke at Herrnhut in regard to it, he said he had never known or heard of any other kind of polyandry in Tibet except fraternal. Polyandry notably exists among the Todas of Southern India, and it has been found in regions very far distant from each other, as among the Kalmucks, the Tasmanians, and the Iroquois of North America; but nowhere does it take such a singular form as among the Nairs of the Malabar coast, who are nominally married to girls of their own caste, but never have any intercourse with their wives; while these latter may have as many lovers as they please, if the lovers are Brahmins, or Nairs other than the husband.

Such arrangements, however, are mere freaks, and are not to be compared with the regular, extensive, and solidified system of Tibetan polyandry. General Cunningham, in his valuable work on Ladak, says that the system "prevails, of course, only among the poorer classes;" but my experience was that it prevailed among all classes, and was superseded by polygamy only where the people were a good deal in contact with either Hindús or Mohammedans. Turner, who had so much opportunity of seeing Western Tibet, is quite clear on this point as regards that part of the country, for he says (p. 349) — "The number of husbands is not, as far as I could learn, defined or restricted within any limits. It sometimes happens that in a small family there is but one male; and the number may seldom perhaps exceed that which a native of rank, during my residence at Tesheo Loomboo, pointed out to me in a family resident in the neigh-

bourhood, in which five brothers were then living together very happily with one female, under the same connubial compact. Nor is this sort of compact confined to the lower ranks of people alone; it is found also frequently in the most opulent families."

I met only one case in which the number of husbands exceeded that of the instance mentioned above. It was that of the family of the *múkea* at Pú, in which six brothers were married to one wife, but the youngest of the brothers was quite a boy. The husband I saw must have been over thirty; and as he had two elder brothers, the arrangement, as a whole, struck one as even more revolting than usual. Instances of three and five husbands were quite common; but, without having gone rigidly into the matter, I should say that the most instances of polyandry were those of two husbands, and that, not because there was any objection to five or six, but simply because no greater number of brothers was usually to be found in a family, as might have been expected from such a system, and as also one of the great ends which that system is designed to effect.

As to the working of polyandry in Tibet, I noticed no particular evidence of its evil effects, though doubtless they exist; and in this respect I am at one with the other European travellers, with the single exception of the Abbé Desgodins, who draws a very frightful picture of the state of morals in the eastern part of the country. He says: "Les hommes riches peuvent avoir autant de femmes qu'ils le désirent, sans compter que quand ils sont en voyage, et qu'ils font visite à leurs amis, la politesse veut qu'on leur en

prête partout. Au Thibet on se prête sa femme comme on se prête une paire de bottes ou un couteau. . . . Les Thibétans n'ont pas non plus le moindre souci de l'honneur de leur filles, celle qui est devenue mère trouve même plus facilement à se marier, par la raison que celui qui l'achète est certain qu'elle n'est pas stérile; ce dévergondage de mœurs est cause d'une stérilité générale."* There is probably some exaggeration here; and, making allowance for that, the description would apply to most semi-civilised races, and need not be charged to the fault of polyandry. The accusation brought by the worthy Abbé against the young persons of Tibet is precisely the same as that which Sir Anthony Weldon made against the Scotch in the time of James VI.,† and can be brought, even at the present day, against a considerable portion of the agricultural and pastoral population of Scotland. It is absurd for Europeans to hold up their hands in holy horror at the immorality which they may observe in ruder and less highly favoured countries, when our own centres of civilisation present, in that respect, such curious results. Fraternal polyandry is not merely opposed both to artificial arrangements and the highest morality, but even to our natural instincts. But there is no sense in charging it with evils which we see existing everywhere. It is more revolting than the prostitution, or unlegalised polyandry, of the West; but its lesson will be lost if it be viewed otherwise than in the cold white light of reason.

It is almost impossible for us to conceive of such a system being in operation, and of its allowing room for affection between relatives; and so it may be well to note that it ex-

* *La Mission du Thibet de 1855 à 1870.* Verdun, 1872.

† *A Perfect Description of the People and Country of Scotland.* London, 1659.

ists. This could only happen among a race of a peculiarly placid, unpassionate temperament as the Turanians unquestionably are, except in their fits of demoniacal cruelty. They have no hot blood, in our sense of the phrase, and all interests are subordinate to those of the family. This supreme family feeling prevents any difficulty arising in connection with the children, who are regarded as scions of the house rather than of any particular member of it. It has been said that, where there is more than one husband, the paternity of the child is unknown, but that is doubtful, though all the husbands are held responsible, and there is no noticeable difference in the relationship of a child to his different fathers. All this would be impossible in a race with strong passions, or where the element of individuality is strongly developed; but it is exactly in these respects that the Turanians are most deficient.

Of course there is a large number of surplus women under this polyandric system, and they are provided for in the Lama nunneries, where they learn to read and copy the Tibetan Scriptures, and to engage in religious services. The nunneries have usually a certain amount of land attached to them, which is cultivated by the occupants, who also hire out their services in the harvest season. I have even had my baggage carried by Lama nuns, when there was a pressure of occupation, and observed nothing particular in their demeanour, except that it was a little more reserved than that of the other women. Of course accidents do happen occasionally; but the excitement which they cause is a proof that they are not very common. When I was at Pú, a great noise was caused by a Lama nun—the daughter of a wealthy zemindar—

—having suddenly increased the population of that village, in defiance of the law of population and her holy vow. About a year before, a visit had been made to Pú by a celebrated Lama from the interior of Chinese Tibet, whose claims to sanctity were so high that the zemindar invited him to stay in his house and expound the Tibetan Scriptures. The nun came down to these reunions from her convent, a few hundred feet up the mountain-side, and the consequence was the event which I have just noticed. Meanwhile the holy man had meanly, but judiciously, gone back into Chinese Tibet. He was hopelessly beyond reach; and the scandal being great, the father, both on his own account and on that of his daughter, had to pay about Rs.300 in all, to the convent, to the scandalised village, and to the state. Such offences are readily condoned, on a sufficient monetary fine being paid; but I heard also that the nun would not be reinstated in her former position without undergoing penance, and manifesting contrition. Such a sin, however, can hardly tell against her long, if her conduct be correct afterwards; for the superior of this very monastery had herself an illegitimate daughter, who was enrolled among the sisterhood. Some sects of the Lamas are allowed to marry, but those who do not are considered more holy; and in no sect are the nuns allowed to marry, and they, as well as most of the monks, take a vow of absolute continence. I am scarcely in a position to have any decided opinion as to how far this vow is observed, but am inclined to believe that it is so usually, notwithstanding the exceptions to the rule.

The Lama church does not concern itself with the marriage union, though its priests often take part in

the ceremonies accompanying the bridal,—as, for instance, in fixing upon an auspicious day. Marriages are often concluded at a very early age, by the parents of the parties, and sometimes when the latter are children. In such cases the bride and bridegroom often live for years separate, in the houses of their respective parents. When the matter has not been previously arranged by his father, the young man who wishes to marry goes to the parents of the girl he has selected with a gift of *chong*, a species of beer which is brewed among the mountains, and this he partakes of along with them. A second visit of the same kind follows, and then a third, when he meets with the object of his choice, and the nuptials are arranged. In some parts of the country more valuable presents, and even gifts of money, are expected, there being a great deal of difference in local usage as to the preliminaries. Women have property in their own right; and, as a rule, childless women are not regarded in any particular manner. The choice of a wife is the right of the elder brother; and among the Tibetan-speaking people it universally prevails that the contract he makes is understood to involve a marital contract with all the other brothers, if they choose to avail themselves of it.

We have already seen what Koepen says as to the origin of this hideous polyandry. Herr Jaeschke also assured me that he knew of no polyandric traditions in Tibet, and that the system there must be indefinitely old. The probability is that it has descended from a state of society somewhat similar to that which at present exists in the Himá-liya, but more primitive, ruder, and uninfluenced by the civilisations of India and China; while those who believe that human beings at one time herded together very much

like flocks of animals, see in it a transition from a still more savage past. There is not much use in speculating on the origin of customs when that origin lies concealed in the mist of antiquity. Such speculation takes very much the shape of finding or inventing uses which the custom under discussion might subserve; but that is a very unsatisfactory region of thought where there are no historical facts to afford guidance. All we can really say on this subject is, that polyandry does subserve certain useful ends. In a primitive and not very settled state of society, when the head of a family is often called away on long mercantile journeys, or to attend at court, or for purposes of war, it is a certain advantage that he should be able to leave a relative in his place whose interests are bound up with his own. Mr Talboys Wheeler has suggested that polyandry arose among a pastoral people, whose men were away from their families for months at a time, and where the duty of protecting these families would be undertaken by the brothers in turn. The system certainly answers such an end, and I never knew of a case where a polyandric wife was left without the society of one at least of her husbands. But the great, the notable end which polyandry serves, is that of checking the increase of population in regions from which emigration is difficult, and where it is also difficult to increase the means of subsistence. That the Malthusian law, or something very like it, is in operation, is now all but universally admitted by political economists. There is a tendency on the part of population to increase at a greater ratio than its power of producing food; and few more effectual means to check that tendency could well be devised than the system of Tibetan polyandry taken in con-

junction with the Lama monasteries and nunneries. Very likely it was never deliberately devised to do so, and came down from some very rude state of society; but, at all events, it must have been found exceedingly serviceable in repressing population among what Koeppen so well calls the snowlands of Asia. If population had increased there at the rate it has in England during this century, frightful results must have followed either to the Tibetans or to their immediate neighbours. As it is, almost every one in the Himáliya has either land and a house of his own, or land and a house in which he has a share, and which provide for his protection and subsistence. The people are hard-worked in summer and autumn, and they are poor in the sense of having small possessions and few luxuries; but they are not poor in the sense of presenting a very poor class at a loss how to procure subsistence. I was a little surprised to find that one of the Moravian missionaries defended the polyandry of the Tibetans, not as a thing to be approved of in the abstract or tolerated among Christians, but as good for the heathen of so sterile a country. In taking this view, he proceeded on the argu-

ment that superabundant population, in an unfertile country, must be a great calamity, and produce "eternal warfare or eternal want." Turner took also a similar view, and he expressly says—"The influence of this custom on the manners of the people, as far as I could trace, has not been unfavourable. . . . To the privileges of unbounded liberty the wife here adds the character of mistress of the family and companion of her husbands." But, lest so pleasing a picture may delude some of the strong-minded ladies (of America) to get up an agitation for the establishment of polyandry in the West, I must say it struck me that the having many husbands sometimes appeared to be only having many masters and increased toil and trouble. I also am by no means sure that the Tibetans are so chivalrous as to uphold polyandry, because they regard "the single possession of one woman as a blessing too great for one individual to aspire to." Nor shall I commit myself to the ingenious opinion that "marriage amongst them seems to be considered rather as an odium—a heavy burden—the weight and obloquy of which a whole family are disposed to lessen by sharing it among them."

THE STORY OF VALENTINE;

AND HIS BROTHER.

PART XIII.—CHAPTER XXXVII.

DICK became in a manner the head of the expedition when the party reached Oxford; his foot was on his native heath; he knew where to take the two old people, both of whom became more and more agitated in their different ways, as they approached to the end of their journey. He put them into a cab; and getting on the box himself, had them driven to the river-side. Lady Eskside grasped her old lord's hand, as they sat there together, jolting through the streets, going to this strangest incident of their lives. She was trembling, though full of resolute strength. The emergency was too much for her nerves, but not for her brave old heart which beat high with generous courage, yet with a sense of danger not to be despised or overlooked. How was she to meet and master this untamed creature of the wilds? how secure her that she might not escape again? and how make the revelation to her son who had got to hate his wife, and to Valentine who knew nothing of his mother? Lady Eskside, with a mixture of pride and terror, felt that it was all in her own hands. She must do everything. The thought made her tremble; but it gave her a certain elation which the reader will understand, but which I cannot describe—which was not vanity nor self-importance—but yet a distinct personal pleasure and satisfaction in being thus able to set everything right for her children. I don't doubt that she had some idea that only her own penetrating eye could have made sure of Dick's identity, and only her close questioning could have

elicited from him so many certain proofs; and it seemed so just, so right, such a heavenly recompense for what she had suffered, that to her hands and no other should be given the power of setting all right. Lord Eskside was less excited. He was thinking more of the boy, less of the circumstances in which he was about to find him, and the thrill in his old frame was almost entirely that of natural anxiety to know how Val was. Dick on the box was not without his tremor too. He did not know what his mother would think of this visit—if it would terrify her, if she would think he had been unfaithful to the charge she had laid upon him not to speak of her. He stopped the cab when they reached the river-side; and, scarcely knowing what he was about, handed Lady Eskside out. "I'll go round by the back and open the door—that's the house," he said, hoarsely—and left them standing by the edge of the grey Thames, which, still somewhat swollen with spring rains, ran full and swift, sweeping round the eyot with all its willows faintly green, upon which, though they did not know it, poor Val had stranded. The sun was shining brightly, but still the river was grey; and Lady Eskside shivered and trembled with that chill of anxiety and excitement which is more penetrating than cold. "This is where Val brought me," said the old lady, as they walked tremulously to the door. "Yes, yes, I mind it all—and there was a shawl like one of mine upon a table. Yes, yes, yes," she said to herself, almost inarticulate—"my

own shawl! Oh, how was it I was so foolish, and did not see at once that it must be *her*; and she had fled out of the place not to see me? It all comes back! She must have known it was me. It's nothing, nothing, my dear! I'm trembling, it's true—how can I help it! But all the time I am steady, steady as a rock; you need not be feared for me."

"I wonder if he is in one of these rooms," said the old lord, looking wistfully at the upper windows. They opened the garden gate, not without difficulty, for they were both very tremulous, and went in to the little garden where there was a pale glow of primroses. There they stood for perhaps a moment looking towards the house, waiting for Dick to open to them, breathless, feeling the great crisis to be near. Lady Eskside clung still to her old lord's arm. He was not a pillar of strength, and shook, too, in his old age and agitation; but there was strength as well as comfort in the mere touch—the sense of standing by each other in those hardest moments, as in all others. As they stood thus waiting, the door opened, and some one came out, walking towards them. He strolled out with one hand in his pocket, with the air of a man issuing forth from his own house. It was not Dick coming to open to them, to admit them. Lady Eskside dropped her husband's arm, and gave a strange cry—a cry of astonishment and confused dismay, half querulous, half violent. Hot tears came rushing to her eyes in the keen disappointment, mingled with wonder, which penetrated her mind. She clasped her hands together almost with a movement of anger—"Richard, *Richard*!" she cried.

He stood for a moment silent, looking at them, confused too. "My father and my mother," he

said to himself under his breath. Then he tried to rally his powers, and put on a smile, and look composed and self-possessed, which he was not; but instead of succeeding in this attempt, grew hot and red, though he was old enough to have been done with such vanities. "This is a very unexpected meeting," he said. "Mother, excuse me if I am startled. Nothing was further from my thoughts than to see you here." Then he stopped short, and made a gulp of agitation and resumed again. "You have heard that Valentine is here? He is just the same; we must wait for the crisis. He is taken good care of——"

"Richard!" said his mother—"oh none of your pretending to me—for God's sake tell us the truth! Do you *know*?—or is it by chance you have come here?"

"It will be better to come into the house, my lady," said Lord Eskside.

I scarcely think she heard what he was saying. She put her hand upon her son's arm, grasping him almost harshly. She was too much excited to be able to contain herself. She had forgotten Val, whom the old lord was longing for. "Do you know, or do you not know?" she cried, her voice growing hoarse. Dick, who had come to the door a minute later than Richard, stood upon the threshold looking at them with a wondering countenance. But no one saw or noticed Dick. He saw the old people absorbed with this new personage, whose back was turned to him, and whom he had never seen before. The mystery was thickening, for here now was another in it, and more and more it grew incomprehensible to Dick. His was not one of the spirits that love mystery. He was open as the day, straightforward, downright. His heart sickened at this maze, at all those difficulties, at the new people who

had thus come into his life. He stood looking at them painfully with a confusion in all his thoughts which utterly disconcerted and disturbed him. Then he turned abruptly on his heel and went away. Where? To his work; that at least never disappointed nor confused him. No strangers came into it to tangle the threads, to turn it all into chaos. He had heard how Valentine was, and that the crisis had not yet come; and he was half indignant, half sad, in his sense of a disturbance which was wholly unaccountable and unjustifiable. The house was his—Dick's—it did not belong to the stranger who had preceded him to the door, and was standing there now in colloquy with the old couple, who evidently had forgotten Dick. What right had they to take him up and cast him down—to take possession of his house, which had cost him dear, which was his, and not theirs, as if he were nothing in it? Dick strode away, more hurt, angry, and “put out,” than he had ever been in his life. He threw off his Sunday coat (none the better for these railway journeys), and, hastily putting on his working-jacket, hurried off to the rafts. There a man could always find something to occupy him—there was honest work, uncomplicated by any bewilderments. He went and thrust himself into it, almost forgetting that he was head-man in his anxiety to dislodge all these disturbing questions from his mind, and to feel himself in reality what he was.

“I think,” said Richard, not without excitement himself, but trying hard not to show his rapid changes of colour, his breathless heat and agitation, “that my father gives good advice, and that you ought to come into the house, where at least we can talk with quiet and decency. There is no reason why you shouldn’t come in,”

he said, with nervous vehemence, pushing open the door behind him; “or the Queen, for that matter, if she were here. The mistress of it is as spotless as any one of you. That much I may say.”

Lady Eskside did not say another word. She grasped her old lord’s arm again, and suffered herself to be led into the little parlour, which she had seen before on another occasion, little thinking whose house it was. Her eye, I need not say, was caught at once by the little shawl on the table. She pointed at it hastily to her husband, who stared, totally unaware what it was to which his attention was directed. They put her into an old carved chair, which was one of poor Dick’s latest acquisitions before all this wonderful commotion began. Richard, scarcely knowing what he was doing, led the way, introduced them into the strange little room, as a man does when he is in his own house. He had got to feel as if it were his own house. Already he had passed many hours there, feeling himself no intruder. He received his mother and placed her in Dick’s easy-chair as he might have received her in the Palazzo Graziani; and the old lady, with her keen eyes, caught at this, though he was as unconscious of it as a man could be.

“You are at home here,” she said to him, with keen suspicion—“it’s no strange place to you, Richard, though it’s strange, strange, to my old lord and me. What does it mean, man?—what does it mean? Have you known all the time? Have you been keeping it secret to drive us wild? What is it—what is it you mean?”

“Where is the boy?” said Lord Eskside. “I do not enter into this question between your mother and you. You will satisfy us both, doubtless, about the mystery,—which, as you all well know, is a

thing I abhor. Richard," said the old man, with a break in his voice, "I want to see the boy."

"Listen first, sir," said Richard, indignant; "how my mother has found out, I don't know; but she is right. Chance—or Providence, if you like the word better—has thrown Val into his—mother's hands. I guessed it when I saw you at Rosscraig, and I came here at once and found it was so——"

"You guessed it? God forgive you, Richard! You've known, then, all the time; you've exposed us and Val to abuse and insult, and maybe killed the lad and broken my old lord's heart. Oh, God forgive you, Richard! is this the way you've done your duty to us and your boy?"

Lady Eskside wrung her hands. Her old face flushed and grew pale; hot tears filled her eyes. Something of personal disappointment was in the pang with which she felt this supposed deception. Women, I fear, are more apt to think of deception than men. Lady Eskside, in the sharpness of her disappointment, rashly jumped to the conclusion that Richard's knowledge was not an affair of yesterday; that there was something behind more than had been told to her; that perhaps, for anything she could tell, he had been visiting this woman, who was his lawful wife, as if the tie between them had been of quite a different character—or perhaps, even, who knows, was trying to palm upon them as his wife some one who did not possess any right to that title. In suspicion, as in other things, it is the first step that costs the most. Lord Eskside did not go so far as his wife did, but the thought began to penetrate his mind too, that if Richard had known this, even for a day, without disclosing it, he had exposed them to cruel and needless pain.

"Catherine," said the old lord,

"we need not quarrel to make matters worse. If he recognises his wife and his other son at last, and it is true that they are here, let us give our attention to make sure of that, and prevent trouble in the future. It is not a question of feeling, but of law and justice. Yes, no doubt, feeling will come in; but you cannot change your son, my lady, any more than he can change his father and mother, which, perhaps, he would have little objection to do. We must put up with each other, such as we are."

"You do me injustice, sir," cried Richard; "both you and my mother. There has been no deception in the matter. You shall hear how it happened afterwards; but in the mean time it is true that she is here, mother. I met her at Val's bedside two days ago for the first time, without warning. I believe if I had given her warning she would have escaped again—but for Val. I am not made of much account between you," said Richard, with a painful smile. "I have little occasion to be vain. You, my mother, and her, my—wife; what you think of is not me, but Val."

"Oh Richard! you would aye have been first with me if you would have let me," said Lady Eskside, as ready to forgive as she had been to censure, her heart melting at this reproach, which was true. As for the old lord, he was not so easily moved either to blame or to pardon. He got up and walked about the room while Richard, still flushed with excitement and a certain indignation, told them the story of the photograph, and his recognition of his wife's face so strangely brought before him by his son. Richard gave his own version of the story, as was natural. He allowed them to perceive the violence of the shock they had given him, without saying very much on the subject; and described how,

though incapable of anything else in the excitement of the moment, he had put force upon himself to make his wife's residence known to his lawyer, and to have a watch kept upon her movements. What he said was perfectly true, with just that gloss which we all put upon our own proceedings, showing them in their best aspect; and Lady Eskside received it as gospel, taking her son's hand into her own, following every movement of his lips with moist eyes, entering with tender and remorseful sympathy into those hidden sentiments in his mind which she had doubted the existence of; and which, up to this moment, he had never permitted her to see. Her husband, however, walked about the room while the tale went on, listening intent, without losing a word, but not so sympathetically — staring hard at Dick's homely ornamentations, his bits of carving, his books, all the signs of individuality which were in the place. I don't know that he remarked their merits, though he walked from one to another, with his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and stared almost fiercely at the carving, with eyes wellnigh hidden under his shaggy brows. He did not say anything while Lady Eskside, weeping and smiling, made her peace with her son. "When she cried, "Oh yes, my dear, my dear, I understand!" he only worked his expressive eyebrows, giving no articulate evidence of emotion. "Val is up-stairs, I suppose? I am going to see him," was all he said in the pause after Richard's story concluded. Lord Eskside climbed up the narrow wooden staircase with a shrug of his shoulders. He was not satisfied with his son's story, as his wife had been. He opened one door after another before he found the room in which Val was lying. To see the boy stretched

there on the bed, with vacant eyes, half dosing, half waking, but quite unconscious of his visitor, went to the old lord's heart far more than Richard's story had done. "If he had spoken out like a man, this might have been spared," he said to himself; and bent over Val's bed to hide the momentary contortion of his features, which brought the water to his eyes. "My poor lad!" he said, with hidden anguish, scarcely noticing for the first moment the nurse on the other side of the bed. She rose with a sudden dilation of terror in her eyes. She had never seen Lord Eskside, and did not know who he was; but felt by instinct that he had been brought hither by the terrible wave of novel events which was about to sweep over her head, and that he had come to take away from her her boy.

Lord Eskside looked at her across the bed where Val was lying. He made her a low bow, with that courtly politeness which now and then the homely old lord brought forth, like an old patent of nobility. But it was difficult for him to know what to say to her—and she gave him no assistance, standing there with a look of panic which disturbed the still, abstracted dignity of her ordinary aspect. "I am afraid I have startled you," he said, his voice softening. "Don't be alarmed. I am your—husband's father. I am sorry, very sorry, that we never met before."

She made no answer, but only a slight tremulous movement intended for a curtesy; then some sense of the necessities of her position, struggling with her fright, she said faintly, "He is just the same—on Saturday he'll be better, please God."

"On Saturday he'll be better! God bless you, my dear! You seem sure? How can you be sure?" cried the old lord, with his eyelids all

puckered together to hide the moisture within.

She put up her hand with a warning gesture. "Hush," she said; "it makes him restless when he hears a voice"—then a curious, exquisite twilight seemed to melt over her face as if some last reflections of a waning light had caught her, illuminating her for the moment with the tenderest subdued radiance—"except mine," she added in tones so low as to be almost inaudible. The old lord was deeply touched. What with his boy's condition, which was worse than he expected, and this voice of great, subdued, and restrained feeling—emotion that had no object but to conceal itself—all his prejudices floated away. He was not in the least conscious of being affected by the beauty which was concealed, too, like the emotion—indeed he would have denied that she had any beauty; but the suppression of both and ignoring of them by their possessor had a great effect upon him; for there was nothing in the world more noble in the eyes of the old Scots lord than this power of self-restraint. He went round to her softly, walking with elaborate precaution, and took her hand for a moment; "God bless you," he said—then, with another look at Val, left the room. He himself, even with all the self-control he had, might have broken down and betrayed the passionate love and anxiety in him had he waited longer there.

Lady Eskside was seated in the parlour alone when he entered; she was leaning back in Dick's great chair, with her handkerchief to her eyes. "He has gone to get the doctor, that we may know everything exactly," she said. "He" had changed to her. She had taken back her own son, her very child, into her heart, (had he not the best right?) and it was Richard who

was "he," not any one else. She was so tender, so happy, so deeply moved by this revolution, that she could scarcely speak to her husband, who, she felt instinctively, had not been subjected to the same wonderful change.

"I have just seen him—and his mother," said Lord Eskside.

"Saw *him*—the boy? Oh my poor Val!" cried the old lady, weeping; and then she raised her hands and turned to her husband with something which was half an apology and half a reproach. "I feel as if I had got my own Richard back—our own boy—and I don't seem able to think of anything else—not even Val."

Lord Eskside took another turn round the little parlour. "I don't want to hurt your feelings, my lady," he said; "but if Richard had had the sense to write to you or me when he wrote to that fine London solicitor of his, all this might have been spared. Sandy Pringle's miserable letter, and all that stramash about the election, and my poor Val's fever—maybe his life——"

"His life! his life!" she said, starting up in alarm from her chair.

"Who can say? It's in God's hands, not ours. His mother says he'll be better on Saturday," Lord Eskside said, turning away.

Meanwhile Dick had thrown himself with a certain passion into his work, feeling a curious reluctance which he had never experienced before to receive the orders of the customers, and to run hither and thither launching boats into the water, drawing them up again, dealing out oars and cushions as he had done for years. If he could have pushed out on the stream himself as Val had done, if he could have rowed a race for life or death with some rival oar, that would have calmed him more than anything. Gentlemen like Val, Lord Eskside's heir, future pos-

essor of all those lovely woods, and of the grey old house full of beautiful things, which was so fresh in Dick's memory, could afford to calm themselves down in that way. But Dick, who was only a working man, could not afford it. To him his work was everything, and to that alone, when all his nerves were tingling, could he resort to bring him down again from any fanciful strain of emotion. He ought to be glad to have it to do, Dick felt ; for had he been idle, it seemed to him that the beating of his heart would have driven him wild. Now, let it swell as it would, he had enough to do to keep him occupied, and no time to think, heaven be praised ! It was, as it happened fortunately, a very busy day. Dick forgot his dinner-hour—forgot everything but the necessity for exertion to keep him from himself. Sometimes he ordered his subordinates about almost fiercely, speaking to them as he had never been heard to speak before. Sometimes, not thinking, he would rush himself to do their work, while they stood by astonished, with a manner so unusual that no one knew what to make of him. Was it possible that the fever was "catching," and that Dick too was going to have it ? But it was a very busy day, and there was plenty of work for everybody, which is a thing that stops speculation. In the afternoon Lord Eskside, straying about the place, found himself on the raft. He had not intended to go there, nor did he know when he got there what he wanted. The old lord was very restless, anxious, and unhappy. He could do nothing indoors—not even keep still and out of the way, which is the first duty of man in a house where sickness is ; and the unfamiliar place did not tempt him to walk as he might have done at home. He had done what he could to occupy him-

self after the brief interview with the doctor, who could say nothing more than had already been said, that no change could come until Saturday, when, for good or evil, the crisis might be looked for. After this Lord Eskside went to the hotel where Richard was living, and engaged rooms, and did what he could for the comfort of his wife, who had come here in her old age without any attendant. But when this slender business was accomplished, he had nothing further to do. He could not keep indoors in Dick's little parlour, which they had taken possession of, none of them reflecting that there was another proprietor whose leave had not been asked or given ; nor could he linger at the outer door, where Harding hung about in attendance. The old lord had no heart to say anything to Harding ; he went to the rafts at last in simple restlessness, having, I almost think, forgotten all about Dick. I suppose it diverted him for the moment from his own heavy thoughts and painful tension of suspense, to see the movement in this busy place—the coming and going—the boats run out into the stream with a pleasant rustle—the slim outriggers now and then carried back all wet and dripping to the boathouses, as one party after another came in. The stir of indifferent cheerful life, going on carelessly all the same under the eyes of a spectator paralysed by anxiety and distress, has a curious bewildering effect upon the mind. He had been there for some minutes before he even noticed Dick's presence at all.

He perceived him at last with a thrill of surprise. Dick had transmogrified himself ; in his working dress he looked more "a gentleman" than he had done in his Sunday coat. He had a straw hat instead of the black one, a blue flannel coat,

and noiseless white boating shoes. The excitement against which he was struggling gave a double animation to his aspect, and made him hold himself more erect than usual, with all the energy of wounded pride. Lord Eskside felt that it must be some consciousness of his true position that gave to Dick's youthful figure that air of superiority which certainly he had not noticed in him before; but it was in reality a contrary influence, the determination to show that he held his own natural position unaffected by all the mysterious hints he had listened to, and found in his work a blessed refuge from the mystery which he did not understand, but was impatient of, and despised. Dick passed Lord Eskside over and over again, in his manifold occupations, touching his hat as he did so, but taking no further notice of his travelling companion. The old lord, on his side, made no demonstration of interest; but he took up a position on the edge of the wharf, and followed the young fellow with his eyes. Dick had pushed back his hat, showing his fair locks and open face; he was never still for a moment, darting hither and thither with lithe light frame, and feet that scarcely seemed to touch the boards. How workmanlike he was, in his element, knowing exactly what to do, and how to direct the others who looked to him! and yet, Lord Eskside thought, so unlike any one else, so free in his step, so bold in his tranquil confidence, so much above the level of the others. He sat down on a bench close by, and knitting his heavy brows, sat intent upon that one figure, watching him more and more closely. There were a great many boating men about, for it was just the opening of the season, and some of them were impatient, and none were

especially disposed to respect the feelings even of the head man at Styles's. "Here, you, Brown," said one young man in flannel; "Brown, I say! Can't the fellow hear? Are we to wait all day?" "Look alive, can't you?" shouted a second; "he's not half the handy fellow he was." "Spoilt by the undergrads," said another; "he's the pet of all the Eton men." "Brown, Brown! By Jove! I'll speak to Styles if this goes on. You, Dick! can't you hear?"

I don't know if Dick felt any annoyance at their impatient outcries, or resented such an address in Lord Eskside's presence. But he came to the call, as was his duty, his cheeks a little flushed, but ready to do whatever was wanted of him. "Here, Brown," said the boating man, carelessly; but he never ended his order. For, before another word could be said, Lord Eskside, glooming with knitted brows, came hurriedly up to Dick, and put his arm through his. "This is no occupation for you," said the old lord. "It is time that this was over;" and before the eyes of the astonished lookers-on, he led him away, too much astonished for the moment to resist. "Who is the old fellow?" asked the boating men; and when (for rank will out, like murder) it was whispered who "Brown's friend" was, a sudden awe fell upon the rafts. A lord! and he had put his arm familiarly into Dick Brown's, and carried him off, declaring this to be no work for him! What could it mean? The effect produced by Val's accident was nothing to the ferment which rose, up and down the river-side, when it was known that a lord—an old lord—not one of your wild undergrads—had walked off Styles's raft, in broad daylight, arm-in-arm with Dick Brown.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Violet went back to Edinburgh the day after her meeting in the woods with Dick. Her heart was so full of what she had heard, that it was all she could do to keep the particulars from old Jean, who was her guardian and companion when, in her trouble, poor child, she managed to escape for a day or two to the Hewan. By a strong effort she kept from talking over the details with her homely old friend; but she could not keep from her the fact that Val was ill. I need not say that Jean knew well enough that there was "something wrong" between the two families—a thing she had been aware of, with the curious instinct which all our servants possess—almost before they knew it themselves. And by this time, of course, Jean knew all that popular opinion said about Mr Pringle's supposed guilt in respect to the election; and she was aware that there had been painful scenes in the house, and that neither his wife, nor his sons, nor his daughter "held with" the unlucky culprit, who, since the election, had gone about with drooping head "as if he was gaun to be hanged," old Jean said. Jean was very much shocked and distressed when she heard of Val's illness. "I thought there was something out o' the ordinary," she said; "him away when there was yon grand dinner, and a strange look about the house a'thegether. Ye may aye ken when the family's in trouble by the look o' the house. Poor callant! there's naething like trouble of mind for bringing on thae fevers; you may take my word, Miss Violet, it's something about that weary election. Eh, what creatures men are! Can they no fecht fair, and take their neives to ane anither, instead of casting up auld ill stories? They

say that's women's way; for my part, I'm of the opinion, that if women are ill with their tongues, men are waur."

"But fevers are not brought on by trouble of mind," said Violet, endeavouring to argue against her own inmost convictions. "Fevers are brought on by—oh, by very different things, by bad air, and—you may read it all in the papers—— Oh, I hope, I hope it is not that, Jean."

"If you put your faith in the papers," said Jean, contemptuously, "that say one thing the day, and another the morn, just as it suits them! Oh ay, they'll tell you an honest midden is waur than an ill story, that creeps into the heart and saps the strength. I'm fond o' the fresh air mysel. We're used to it here up at the Hewan, and it's like meat and drink; but if some ill-wisher was to rake up a nasty story about my auld man that's in heaven, or my John, what do you think would harm me maist, Miss V'let, —that, or a' the ill smells in Lass-wade? and I'll no say but what that corner by the sniddy is like to knock you down—though Marion Miller's bairns, so far as I can see, are no a prin the waur."

Violet did not venture upon any reply, for, indeed, it seemed to her innocent soul that mental causes were far more likely to make one ill than those vulgar evils upon which the newspapers insisted. For her own part, she felt very sure, as old Jean did, that Val's illness arose from the misery and excitement of the election, and not from any lesser cause. I suppose this was quite foolish, and that the poor young member for Eskshire must have gone into some cottage, or passed by some drain in the course of his canvassing, which was the

real occasion of his fever. My ignorance is too great on such subjects to warrant me in venturing the supposition that the other part of him, that mental part so much discredited and put out of court in the present day—the one thing about us which nobody can quite account for—had anything to do with it; but Violet and old Jean, both of them as ignorant as myself but more courageous—and both convinced in their different ways that this special development of protoplasm called by ignorant persons their mind, is the most important part of us—unhesitatingly ignored the drain, which no doubt did the mischief, and set down Val's fever to his misery with all the evident precision of cause and effect. Violet could not say any more to the old woman whose remarks she neither dared to be sympathetic with or irritated by, since either demonstration would have betrayed her father, who had done it all. So she hurried home next morning, attended by her maid, breathless till she reached the mother, the natural receiver of all her complaints and troubles. Mrs Pringle saw there was something to tell from the first glance at Violet's countenance, in which all her emotions writ themselves easily to the accustomed eye. She sent her up-stairs to "take off her things," and followed her, hoping that old Lady Eskside might perhaps have met the child somewhere, and melted towards her, the only imaginable way in which any renewal of friendship could be possible. When she heard what it was, however, Mrs Pringle shook her head. "My dear," she said, "you are letting your feelings run away with you. Men don't get ill and take fevers from excitement except in novels. No doubt there must be something wrong about Rossraig; these old houses

are never quite to be depended upon. God knows that letter has done you and me harm enough, more harm than it could do to Valentine—but we have taken no fever. I am very sorry for him, poor fellow; but he's young, and has a good constitution—no doubt he'll pull through; and my Vi must not cry like this for a man that is nothing to her," the good mother said, proudly—putting her handkerchief and her hand, which was still softer, across Violet's streaming eyes to stop her tears.

"Oh, mamma, how can I help it?" sobbed poor Vi.

"My darling, you must help it. I am not saying it will be easy. Me myself, with children of my own that take up my mind, I find myself thinking of that poor boy when I have plenty other things to think of. Ah, Violet, you kiss me for that! but, my dear, ask yourself—after what has come and gone—how could it ever, ever be?"

"No one wants it to be!" said Violet, with one of her vehement impulses of maiden pride, raising her head from her mother's shoulder with a hot, angry flush covering her face; "but one does not cease—to take an interest—in one's—friend, because of any quarrel. I am friends with him forever, whatever happens. No one can say anything against that. And we are cousins, whatever happens. I told Mr Brown so."

Mrs Pringle shook her head over the friendship and cousinship which continued to take so warm "an interest" in Val; but she was wise and made no further remark. "I wonder who this Mr Brown may be!" was all she said, and instantly set her wits to work to find something for Violet to do. In a house where there were so many boys this was not difficult; and it cannot be questioned that at this crisis of her young existence Moray Place was much safer for Violet than the Hewan.

The next two days were each made memorable by a note from Dick. They were couched almost in the same words, and Violet reading them over and over again could extract nothing from them more than met the eye. Dick, in a very careful handwriting, too neat perhaps, and legible, wrote as follows :—

"MADAM,—Mr Ross is just the same. This is not to be wondered at, as I told Miss Violet that there could be no change till Saturday. With your permission I will write again to-morrow.—Your obedient servant,
RICHARD BROWN."

Even Mrs Pringle could find nothing to remark upon in this brief epistle. "I wonder how he knows your name?" was all she said, and Violet did not feel it necessary to enter into any particulars on this point. The second bulletin was just like the first. Mrs Pringle had this note in her pocket in the evening after dinner when her husband came up to her with an excited look, and thrust the little local Eskside paper, the 'Castleton Herald,' into her hand. "Look at this!" he said, pointing out a paragraph to her with a hand that trembled. How glad she was then that this conveyed no shock to her, and that Violet knew with certainty the state of the matter which the newspaper unfolded so mysteriously! "We regret to learn," said the 'Herald,' "that the new member for the county, Mr Ross, whose election so very lately occupied our pages, lies dangerously ill in England of fever—we suppose of that typhoid type which has lately made so much havoc in the world, and threatened still greater havoc than it has made. We have no information as to how the disease was contracted, but in the mean time Lasswade and the neighbourhood have been thrown into alarm and gloom by the sudden departure of such members of the

noble family of Eskside as were still remaining at Rossraig. We trust before our next week's issue to be able to give a better account of Mr Ross's state."

"I knew Val was ill," said Mrs Pringle, composedly; "Violet heard of it at Eskside." She could not refrain from a stroke of vengeance as she handed the paper back to him. "I hope you are satisfied with your handiwork now," she said.

"My handiwork?"

"Just yours," said Mrs Pringle—"just yours, Alexander; and if the boy should die—which as good as him have done—what will your feelings be?"

"My feelings?" said Mr Pringle; "what have I to do with it?—did I give him his fever? Of course it must have been bad air or some blood-poisoning—or something. These are the only ways in which fever communicates itself;" but as he spoke (for he was not a bad man) his lips quivered, and there was a tremor in his voice.

"It is easy to say that—very easy to say it—and it may be true; but if you take the heart and strength out of a man, and leave him no power to throw off the ill thing when it comes? Alexander," said Mrs Pringle, solemnly, "I will never hold up my head again in this world if anything happens to Val!"

"You speak like a fool—or a woman. It comes to much the same thing," cried her husband; and he went away down-stairs and shut himself into his library quivering with the hot sudden rage which belongs to his conscience-stricken state. How miserable he was, trying to study a case in which he had to speak next day, and able to understand nothing except that Valentine Ross was ill, perhaps dying, and through his means! He had never meant that. He had meant to have his revenge for an imaginary wrong, and many little imaginary

slights, and perhaps to make his young supplanter lose his election ; but that he might put Val's life in danger or injure him seriously had never entered into Mr Pringle's thoughts. He tried to persuade himself that it was no concern of his, pursuing in an undercurrent, as his eyes went over his law-papers, all the arguments about sanitary precautions he had ever read. "What a fool I am to think *that* could have had anything to do with it !" he cried, throwing away his papers when he could bear it no longer, and beginning to pace up and down his room. What a burning restless pain he had at his heart ! He cast about him vaguely in a kind of blank hopelessness what he could do, or if he could do anything. This he had never meant. He would not (he said to himself) have hurt Val or any one, for all the Eskside estates ten times over ; and if anything happened to the boy he could never hold up his head again, as his wife said. He had been wretched enough since that miserable election day. He had been conscious that even his own friends looked coldly upon him, suspecting him of something which went too far for ordinary political animosity or the fair fighting of honourable contest ; and feeling that his own very family, and even the wife of his bosom, were against him, though Mrs Pringle, after her first very full and indignant expression of her opinion, had said no more on the subject. Still he had not her moral support, a backing which had scarcely ever failed him before, and he had the sense of having broken all the ties of friendship with the Eskside family—old ties which, though he did not love the Rosses, it was painful altogether to break. He had thrown away those ties, and made his adversaries bitter and his friends suspicious. So little was Mr Pringle a bad man, that he

had pursued these thoughts for a long time in his secret heart without recollecting that, should Valentine die, he would be reinstalled in his position as heir-presumptive. When this suddenly flashed upon him, he threw himself in his chair and covered his face with his hands. In that case it would be murder, mere murder ! He would have killed the boy for the sake of his inheritance. This startled him beyond anything I can say. Perhaps the profoundest and most impassioned of all the prayers that were said that night for Val's recovery rose in a sudden anguish of remorse and surprised guilt from the heart of Val's enemy. He shook like a man struck with palsy ; his nerves contracted ; the veins stood out on his forehead. He had never meant to harm the boy—never, never, God knows !—except in some momentary way, by a little shame, a little disappointment, which could have made no real difference in so happy and prosperous a life. The pain of this thought gripped him as with the crushing grasp of a giant. What could he do, he said to himself, writhing in his chair—what could he do to make amends ? If he could but have believed in pilgrimages, how gladly would he have set out bare-footed to any shrine, if that would have bought back the young life which was in danger ! Heaven help him ! of all the people concerned there was no one so entirely to be pitied as poor Mr Pringle, lying there prostrate in his chair without any strength left in him, bodily or mental, or any one to back him up, saying to himself that perhaps it might be that he had murdered Val. He seemed to see before his eyes the bold handsome boy, the fine young fellow all joyous and triumphant in the glory of his youth ; and was it his hand—a man with children of his own whom he loved—that had stricken Valentine down ?

Next day Mr Pringle broke down in his case before the courts, and looked so distracted and miserable that the very Lords of Session took notice of it. "Sandy Pringle is breaking up early," Lord Birkhill said to Lord Caldergrange; "he never had any constitution to speak of." "Perhaps it is family affection and anxiety about young Ross of Eskside," said Lord Caldergrange to Lord Birkhill; and these two learned authorities, both old enough to have been Sandy Pringle's father, chuckled and took snuff together over his family affection and his early breakdown. The news from the 'Castleton Herald' about Val's illness was copied that morning into all the Edinburgh papers. Mr Pringle himself, being of the Liberal party, saw only the 'Scotsman,' where it was simply repeated; but when he was leaving the Parliament House, his son Sandy came to him with the 'Courant,' which, as every body knows, is the Conservative paper,—the one in which a *communiqué* from the Eskside party would naturally appear. "Have you seen this, sir?" said Sandy, not, his father thought, without a glimmer of vindictive satisfaction. They were all against him, wife and children, friends and circumstances. But the paragraph in the 'Courant' was one of a very startling description, and had already woke up the half of Edinburgh—everybody who knew or professed to know anything of the Eskside family—to wonder and interest. The 'Courant' gave first the paragraph from the 'Herald,' then added another of its own. "We are glad to be able to add that more favourable news has been received this morning of Mr Ross's condition. The crisis of the fever is now past, and all the symptoms, we understand, are hopeful." Then came the further information which took away everybody's breath. "We are authorised to state," said

the 'Courant,' "that Mr Ross, whose severe illness at such an interesting juncture of his life has called forth so much public interest and sympathy, was fortunately at the house of his mother, the Hon. Mrs Richard Ross, in Oxford, when the first symptoms of fever made their appearance, and accordingly had from the first every medical attention, as well as the most devoted nursing which affection could give."

The paper fell out of Mr Pringle's hand when he had read this. Sandy grasped him by the arm, thinking he would have fallen too. "For heaven's sake," cried Sandy, in a fierce whisper, "don't make an exhibition of yourself *here!*" Mr Pringle did not answer a word, not even to the apologies with which, when they were safe out of the crowded precincts of the Parliament House, his son followed these hasty unfilial words. He went home to Moray Place in a condition of mind impossible to describe, feeling himself like a man caught in a snare from which there was no exit. The Hon. Mrs Richard Ross, his mother! Had he really read those words in black and white? Were they no fiction, but true? His heart was relieved a little, for Val was better; but how could he ever extricate himself from the labyrinth he had got into? He had defied the Rosses to produce this mother, and her appearance seemed to Mr Pringle to close up every place of repentance for him; to put him so terribly in the wrong that he could never face his friends again, or the public which knew him to be the author of that fatal letter to the electors of Eskshire. Surely no sin ever had such condign and instantaneous punishment. He was not a murderer, that was a thing to be thankful for; but he could be proved a liar—a maker of cruel, unfounded statements—a reporter of scandals! He shut him-

self up in his library, making some pretence of work to be done. As for Sandy, he did not go in at all, being angry and unhappy about the whole business. That Valentine's mother should be found, and his rights, which Sandy had never doubted, fully established, he was heartily glad of. Mrs Pringle's wise training had saved Sandy from even a shadow of that folly of expectation which had so painfully affected his father; but Sandy was indignant beyond description, hurt in his pride, and mortified to the heart, that his father should have put himself in such a mean position. I do not think there was any tingling recollection in him of the blow Val had given him. If he had borne malice, it would have vanished utterly at the first mention of Val's illness; but he did not bear any malice. He bore another burden, however, more heavy—the burden of shame for his father's unwarrantable assault, which, out of respect for his father, he could not openly disown, but must share the disgrace of, though he loathed the offence. I think Sandy may be excused if he felt himself too cross, too wretched in his false position, to face the rest of the household, and convey to them this startling news.

They had, however, their news too, scarcely less startling. It was the Monday after the Saturday on which Val had passed the crisis of his fever, and Sunday had been very trying to these two women in its entire cessation of news, as Sunday so often is in cases of anxiety. When Dick's letter at last came, there was something in it which they scarcely noticed in their first agitation of joy, but which, by dint of much reading, came out very strongly at last to their puzzled perceptions. There was an indescribable indefinite change in their correspondent's style. But the reader shall judge for himself what this was.

"DEAR MADAM,—I am happy to be able to tell you that the crisis is over, and Valentine is decidedly better. Perhaps you are aware that all the family are here. He has recognised us all, and, though weak, will soon regain his strength, the doctor thinks. Other things have happened, of a very wonderful kind, which I can scarcely write about; but I hope it may now be possible that I may one day see you, and explain everything to Miss Violet which she may wish to know. I do not like to run the risk of agitating Valentine by telling him that I am writing, but, if you will permit me, I will write again; and I hope you will always be so very kind as to think of me, whatever may be the change in circumstances, as yours and Miss Violet's obedient servant,
"RICHARD."

"What does it mean?" said Mrs Pringle. "I am afraid the young man is taking too much upon himself. To sign himself just 'Richard' to you and me, is a piece of presumption, Vi; and to call Lord Eskside's grandson 'Valentine!' I am not bigoted about rank, as you know; but this is too much."

Violet was confounded too. "Perhaps in nursing he has got familiar without knowing it," she said. "Oh, mamma, you could not think he was presumptuous if you had seen Mr Brown."

"That is all very well, my dear," said Mrs Pringle. "I believe he is a good young man; but perhaps it was a little rash to take him into your confidence. I think I heard your papa come in. Go and see if he is in the library. It might be a comfort to him to know that Val is better. Go; and if you see an opportunity, tell him. Say I have had a letter;—that is all that it is needful to say."

Violet, though reluctant, obeyed; and Mrs Pringle read Dick's letter

again, not knowing what to make of it. What did he mean by signing himself "Richard"? by calling Val by his Christian name? Her conclusion was, that this boatman, in whom Violet had so rashly put confidence, was presuming upon the girl's openness and innocence. Mrs Pringle thanked heaven that her child "had the sense" to ask him to write to her mother, who was quite safe, and quite able to manage any presuming person. She could not make up her mind about this, feeling an uneasy consciousness in the letter of something unexplained, something more than met the eye, to which, however, she had no clue; but she resolved, at least, that this young man should have no further encouragement; that she would herself write to him, thanking him for his communication, and politely dropping him, as a woman of Mrs Pringle's age and condition knows how to do. Perhaps it had been imprudent of Violet to refer to him at all; but it was an imprudence of which no further harm had come. She resumed her work, putting away the letter calmly enough, for the urgency was not great enough to call for any speedy action; while Violet went down-stairs to the library, somewhat tremulous, and half afraid of the morose tones and look into which of late her father had fallen. When she went in, he snatched up some of his papers, and pretended to be studying them very closely, the 'Courant' lying at his side upon the writing-table; but it was the law-papers, and not the 'Courant,' which Mr Pringle pretended to read. Violet made a shy circle round the table, not knowing if she might venture to speak. Her courage failed her, until she suddenly remarked, underneath the shadow of the hand which supported his head, that her father was watching her, and that his face was very grey and pallid

in the noonday light. This gave her resolution enough to conquer her timidity. She went up to him, and put her hand softly on his shoulder.

"Papa," she said, "I came to tell you that Valentine is better to-day. Mamma has just had a letter——"

"I know he is better," said Mr Pringle, with a sigh; and then he pointed out to her the notice in the paper. "He is better; but there is more behind—more than we know."

Vi read the paragraph wondering. It did not affect her except with surprise. "His mother?" she said, "I never knew——" and then she bethought herself suddenly of all that had passed, and of that fatal attack upon Valentine which had (no doubt) brought on his fever, and which threatened to separate him from her for ever. "Oh, papa!" she cried suddenly, with a flash from her eyes which seemed to scorch the culprit like a gleam of angry yet harmless lightning; then she added, looking at him fixedly, with indignant firmness: "But you are glad of this? glad he is better? glad his mother is found, and that everything will go well?"

Mr Pringle paused a moment looking at her. He was afraid to contradict her. He answered hurriedly, half servilely: "Yes, yes—I'm glad;" then, with a groan—"Vi, I am made a fool of. I am proved a poor, mean, paltry liar; that was never what I meant to be. Perhaps I said more than was right; but it was for justice, Vi—yes, it was for justice, though you may not believe what I say."

If you consider all that Violet had suffered, you will perceive how hard it was for her all at once to look upon this question impartially, to believe what her father said. She turned away her head from him in natural resentment. Then her tender heart was touched by the tones of wretchedness in his voice.

"Yes," he said, getting up from his chair, "you may think it was all ill feeling—and so many think; but it was for justice too. And now, apparently, things are turning out as I never expected. I did not believe in this woman, and God knows whether it may not be a cheat still. But if this is true that they are bold enough to put in the newspaper, then," said Mr Pringle, with a groan, "I'm in the wrong, my dear—I am in the wrong, and I don't know what to do."

He sank down again, leaning his head on the table, and hiding his face in his hands. Vi's heart melted altogether. She put her soft arm round his neck, and bent down her head upon his. She did not feel the bitterness of being in the wrong. It seemed to her innocent soul that there was so easy a way to shake off that burden. She clasped her father round the neck and whispered consolation. "Papa, dear! you have nothing to do but to say this to them. Oh, what makes you

think you don't know what to do? Say you were wrong, and that you are sorry. One is so certain that this must be the right thing."

He shook her away not unkindly but with a little impatience. "You don't know—you are too young to know," he said.

"Papa? can there be any doubt," said Violet, in the majesty of her innocence. "When one has done wrong, one undoes it, one confesses that it was wicked. What else? Is it not the first lesson one learns in life?" said the girl, serene in perfect certainty, and sadly superior to her age, in what she considered her experience of that existence of which she already knew the sorrows. She stood over him as grave and sweet as an angel, and spoke with entire and childlike confidence in her abstract code. "We all may be wrong," said Violet, "the best of us; but when we find it out we must say so, and ask pardon of God and of those whom we have wronged, papa. Is there any other way?"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Of all the persons involved at this crisis, I think the most to be sympathised with was honest Dick who wrote the letter over which Mrs Pringle pondered out of such a maze and confusion of feeling as seldom arises without personal guilt in any mind. From his very first glimpse of the new personage introduced into his little world—the stranger who had suddenly appeared to him when he went to open his own door to Lady Eskside, standing between him and her, anticipating and forestalling him—a glimmering instinctive knowledge who this stranger was had flashed into Dick's mind. Already the reader is aware he had thought it probable that Valentine's father was also his own father, and had endea-

voured to account to himself for his mother's strange behaviour on this score. I cannot quite describe the feelings with which Dick, with his tramp-traditions, regarded such a supposed father. What could "the gentleman," who had been his mother's lover, be to him? Nothing, or less than nothing—not "the author of his being," as our pious grandfathers used to say; but something much more like an enemy, a being half malignant, half insulting, with whom he had nothing to do, and towards whom his feelings, if not those of mere indifference, would be feelings of repulsion and instinctive dislike. He felt no shame on his mother's account or his own; but for the other who had left that mother and himself to take their

chance in the woods or on the streets, he was ashamed of his connection with him, and felt mortified and humbled by the mere suggestion of his existence. So long as he kept out of the way, Dick could refrain from thinking of this unknown parent; but the moment he appeared, he woke a hundred lively emotions in the bosom of his son. Dislike, annoyance, a sense of pride injured, and secret humiliation came to him at the first glance of Richard Ross. This was his feeling before any hint of the real state of affairs had reached him. The old lord had not made the disclosure that first day, but waited until the crisis of Valentine's fever was over. Then he called to Dick to go out with him, and there, on the bank of that river which had witnessed all the changes in his fortune, this last and most extraordinary change was revealed to the bewildered young man. Dick's mind was already excited by the painful interval of suspense which occurred just before Valentine was pronounced to be on the way of recovery; and when this revelation was made to him, the confusion in his thoughts was indescribable. That he was Valentine's brother—not secretly and guiltily, but in the eye of day—that the great house which he had looked upon with so much awe and admiration was his home—that all the accessories and all the realities of wealth and rank were his, actually his—relatives, connections, leisure, money, luxury,—was more than he could understand. He did not believe it at first. He thought the old lord had gone mad, that he had been seized with some sudden frenzy fit; that he had altogether misconceived the relationship between his son, the gentleman whom Dick disliked and suspected of being his father, and the poor lad who never had known what a father was. "I

think I know what you mean. I had got to suppose he was my father for some time," said Dick, bluntly, "but not in that way. You are mistaken, sir; surely you are mistaken."

"How could I be mistaken? are there more ways of being your father than one?" said the old lord, half amused by the lad's incredulity. Dick shook his head; he was better informed than Lord Eskside, who was so much his senior. He knew things which it was impossible the other could know—but how was he to say them? It did not occur to him even now that there was any relationship between the father of Richard Ross and himself, even though he was prepared to believe that he himself was Richard Ross's son.

"I don't understand you, any more than you understand me," said Lord Eskside, "and I don't wonder that you're confounded; but, nevertheless, what I have told you is true. I am your grandfather, Dick. Ah, that takes you by surprise! Now, why, I would like to know? since you believe my son is your father, though 'not in that way'—"

"My lord," said Dick, "I beg your pardon; but there's ways of being a man's son without being anything to his relations, and that's what I am thinking of. In my class we understand that such things are—though perhaps they oughtn't to be."

"But, you gomerl, you belong to my class, and not to your own!" said the old lord, feeling, with a mixture of pain and amusement and impatience, his own ignorance before the superior and melancholy knowledge of life possessed by this boy. "What must I say to convince you? You are Valentine's twin brother; do you not see what that means? and can you suppose that anything in the world but a boy's mother would nurse Val as that woman is doing?—besides, he's her living picture," said Lord Eskside, abruptly,

and not without a grudge. He said it to convince this boy, who was a genuine Ross, without dispute or doubt; but even now it gave him a pang to acknowledge that his Val was like the tramp-mother, and not like the noble race of which his father came.

Dick stopped short, and put out his hand blindly as if to save himself from falling. This was a new view of the subject altogether. He could understand the relationship through the father; but—his mother! Valentine! What did it all mean? He caught his breath, and something like a sob came from his breast. "I can't understand it—I can't understand it!" he cried, feeling choked as well as blinded; air failing him, sight failing him, and the whole steady earth turning round and round. When he recovered himself a little he turned to Lord Eskside, who was watching him closely from under his shaggy eyebrows. "Don't say anything more, sir," he cried, with an effort which was almost piteous. "Let me try to make it out—I can't all at once——"

"Go home, my lad," said the old lord, kindly patting him on the shoulder, "and think it out at your leisure."

"Thank you, sir—thank you," cried Dick; and he turned back without another word, and hurried to his little bedroom, which was next door to the one in which Valentine lay. Ought he to have been overwhelmed with delight and joy? Instead of being a nobody, Dick Brown, Styles's head-man, he was Richard Ross, Lord Eskside's grandson, a person of importance, the son of a future baron; superior to all his old surroundings, even to most of his old patrons. But Dick was not glad at first, not even when he had fully realised this wonderful news, and allowed to himself that, Lord Eskside having told it, it must be true. He had found a

family, a name, a position in the world; but he seemed to have lost himself. He sat down on his bed in the small room which he had himself furnished with a hundred little graces and conveniences, and of which a week ago he had been proud, and covered his face with his hands. But for his manhood, he could have sobbed over this extraordinary break and stop in his life; and at the first he was no more able to reconcile himself to being Dick Brown no longer, than Mr Richard Ross would have been able to reconcile himself to descending into the place of Styles's head-man! The change was as great one way as another; indeed I think the higher might have been better able to come down than the lower, who did not understand how he was to mount up, and in whose modest, simple soul there rose on the moment impulses of pride he had never been conscious of possessing. Here, in his natural sphere, he was respected, thought well of, and everybody was aware how well he fulfilled his duties, bearing himself like a man, whatever he had to do. But this new world was all dark to him, a place in which he would have no guidance of experience, in which he would be judged according to another standard, and looked down upon. I do not mean to paint Dick as a perfect being, and this sense of natural pride, this personal humiliation in his social rise, gave him a pang which was at least as respectable as other pangs of pride. He did not know how long he sat there pondering blankly, forecasting with sombre thoughts an unknown future. He had lost himself, whom he knew, and he could not tell how the new self whom he did not know would be able to harmonise his life. He was still sitting there, with his hands over his eyes, when a faint sound in the room roused him, and, looking up, he saw his mother, who had entered

softly, and now stood looking at him. He returned her look seriously for a moment before he spoke.

"Mother, is this true?"

"Yes," she said, clasping her hands as if she would have wrung them. "Yes, boy, yes; it's true. I gave up the one, because I thought he had a right to one; and I kept you, Dick. I was your mother that bore you, and sure I had a right to you."

"Just a word more, mother," said Dick, softly, "not to vex you: the little chap that died—was it *him*?—the one that you said died?"

"He died to me," she cried—"to me and to you. I never, never thought to set eyes on him again. I gave him up, free. Dick, that night on the river, when you helped him with his boat——"

"Yes, mother?"

"I should ha' gone away then. I should have taken you off, my boy, and never let you know him; but it got into my head like wine," she cried; "the sight of him, Dick, so handsome and so kind! and to think he was my lad, mine, all the same as you. And he'd look at me in such a way, wondering like, as nobody but him ever looked—as if he wanted to ask, who are you? who are you?—what are you to me? Many and many a day I've caught his eye; and nobody but me knew why the lad looked like that—him least of all—only me. It got into my head, Dick, watching him. I couldn't go. And then to see you two together that were never meant to be together all your lives!"

"You mean, mother, that were born never to be separate?" said Dick.

"Yes, lad, yes; that is what I mean," she cried, dropping into a chair, and covering her face with her apron. For a moment there was that in Dick's heart which kept him from speaking, from trying to comfort her. The best of us now and then must think of ourselves. Dick was too much confused in

mind to blame his mother, but it gleamed across him, among so many other thoughts—if it was to be that he was not Dick Brown, how much better it would have been that he had never been Dick Brown; this is a confused sentence, but it was thus that the thought passed through his mind. The loss of himself, and even of "the little chap that died," pained him—and this loss was for no reason, it seemed—for how much better would it have been had he always known the truth! This kept him for a moment from saying anything to her—but only for a moment; then he rose and went to his mother, laying his hand on her shoulder—

"It's all very confusing, mother," he said; "but it's best you did not go away. I've got most of my happiness in life from knowing—him. The pity is you ever did go away, mother dear; but never mind; anyhow, though all the rest is changed, there's nothing changed between you and me."

"Oh, my lad!" she cried, "they'll take you from me—they'll take you both from me, Dick."

"They can't do that," he said with a smile, soothing her; "you forget we're *men*, mother. Take heart. So he's the little chap that died? I always thought there was something about him different from all the other gentlemen," said Dick, melting. "The first time I set eyes on him, I fancied him—and he me," he added, after a little pause, the moisture creeping to his eyes; "which was more strange; for what was I that he should take notice of me? The first time he saw you, mother, he was so struck he could scarcely speak; and said, Why didn't I tell him you were a lady——"

"Me!" she cried, looking up; "me—a lady——"

"That was what he said—he knew better than the like of us," said Dick. Then, after a pause, the good fellow added, with self-abnega-

tion like that of old Lord Eskside, for he did not like to acknowledge this any more than his grandfather did ; “and they say he’s your living picture, mother—and it’s true——”

“Oh, Dick ! oh, my boy, my Val, that I’ve carried in my arms and nursed at my breast !—but he’ll never know his mother. Come, Dick, come, as long as we’ve the strength. We’ll go away, lad, you and me——”

“Where, mother ?”

“Out, out, anywhere—to the road. It’s there I belong, and not in houses. Before they take you both from me—Dick, Dick, come !—we’ll go away, you and me.”

She started up as she spoke and caught at his arm, but, giddy and weak with long watching and the fatigue, which in her excitement she had not felt, dropped heavily against him, and would have fallen had he not caught her. “It’s nothing ; it’s a dizziness,” she murmured. “I’ll rest a moment, and then we’ll go.”

Dick laid her tenderly upon his bed. “You’re overdone, mother dear,” he said ; “and this house is mine whatever happens, and you’re the queen in it, to do what you please. When you’re rested, we’ll think what to do. Besides, *he* may want us yet,” he added, forcing a smile ; “he is not out of the wood yet that we should run away from him. Mother, though he’s my—brother, as you all say, I don’t seem to know his name.”

The mother, lying down on her son’s bed, with Dick’s kind face bending over her, gave way to a soft outburst of tears. “He is Val,” she said. “Dick and Val—Dick and Val. Oh, how often I’ve said them over !—and one to him and one to me. That was just ; I always knew that was just !” she cried.

It seemed to Dick when he went out of the room, leaving her behind him to rest, that years had passed over him since he took refuge there. Already this strange disclosure was

an old thing of which there could be no doubt. Already he was as certain that he was no longer Dick Brown of Styles’s, as he was of his existence—and would have been sharply surprised, I think, had any one called him by that name : and as a consequence of this certainty he had ceased to consider the change in himself. Something else more interesting, more alarming, lay before him—a new world, a family of which he knew nothing, a father whom he disliked to think of. Even Val, who he knew would be changed to him. He had felt for him as a brother before he knew ; would he be a brother now ? or would the very bond of duty, the right Dick had to his affection, quench that warm sweet fountain of boyish kindness which had risen so spontaneously, and brightened the young wanderer’s life ? Then there was his mother to think of among all these strange unknown people. He had understood very imperfectly the story Lord Eskside had told him ; and now he came to think of it, why was it that she, so young as she must have been, had fled from her husband ? What reason could she have had for it, unless her husband treated her unkindly ? This idea roused all the temper (there was not much) in Dick’s honest nature. No one should treat her unkindly now, or look down upon her, or scorn her lowliness ! With a swelling heart Dick made this vow to himself. He would have to defend her, to protect her honour, and credit, and independence ; and then, on the other hand, he would have to stand against herself, her wild impulse of flight, her impatience of control. Already he felt that, though it was but an hour or two since he had been Dick Brown, he could never be Dick Brown again ; and though he would not have his mother crossed or troubled, still she must not, if he could help it, fly

and turn everything into chaos again. Care rose upon him on every side as he forecasted his new life ; but it had to be faced, and he did so with steady valour. He went softly to the door of the sick-room and looked in to see if anything was wanted. Val, very weak and spent, but conscious, and noting what went on with eager curiosity, saw him, and, smiling faintly, beckoned to him with his hand. Lady Ekside was seated in the nurse's place bending fondly over her boy. She said, "Come in," but with a half-jealous, half-fretful tone. She thought it was the mother, and the old lady *was* jealous, though she would not have willingly betrayed it, longing just for one hour to have her boy to herself. Val held out his thin hand, and said, "Brown, old fellow ! how pleasant it is to see you again !" "I am glad you are better," said Dick, feeling cold and hard as the nether millstone. It was not Val who had changed, but himself. Then he went out of the room, feeling mean and miserable, and going downstairs, wrote that letter in which, for the first time, he called his brother by his name. In the midst of this a sudden softening came to him. He put down his pen, and his dry eyes grew moist, and an infinite sweetness stole into his heart. Now he should see her again, speak to her perhaps, be a friend of hers. He finished his letter hastily, but how could he sign it ? What name had he but his Christian name ? He could not put a false name to her ; so he ended his letter hastily, and went out to post it, as he always did, himself. And then another thing happened to him, a new step in his career.

In the little dark passage at the foot of the stairs, he met Richard face to face : they had scarcely met before, but they could not pass each other now that they knew each other, and each knew that the other knew. It was a strange meeting to

be the first between a father and son, but yet there was a kind of advantage in their getting it over, which Richard was quick to perceive. In his heart he was little less embarrassed than his son was ; but he was a man of the world, and knew how to behave in an emergency with that ease of speech which looks half miraculous to the inexperienced. He held out his hand to his son at first without saying anything, and poor Dick felt in spite of himself the strangest thrill of unexpected feeling when he put out with hesitation his hard workman's hand into that white and soft yet vigorous clasp. Then Richard spoke :

"My father has told you what we are to each other," he said. "My boy, I do not blame your mother, but it is not my fault that I see you now for the first time. But I know you a little—through Val, your brother : who found you by instinct, I suppose, after we had all searched for you in vain."

Dick's countenance was all aglow with the conflict of feeling in him ; his voice laboured in his throat with words that would not come. The contrast between his own difficulty of speech and the ease of the other unmanned him altogether. "I—I have known—him—a long time," was all he could stammer forth.

"Thank heaven for that !" said Richard, with a gleam of real pleasure ; and with another pressure of his hand he let his new son go. Dick went out to post his letter strangely excited but subdued. What it was to be a gentleman, he thought ! and this was his father, *his* father ! A new pride unknown to him before came into existence within him, a glimmer which lighted up that dim landscape. After all, the new world, though it was so strangely mysterious and uncertain, was it not more splendid, more beautiful to the imagination, than the old world could ever have been ?

Val made slow but sure progress towards recovery, and the family lived a strange life in attendance upon him, occupying Dick's little parlour all day, and returning to the hotel for the night. The intercourse between them was of a peculiar character. Dick, watching intently, jealous for his mother, soon perceived that she was of much more importance to the others than he thought possible, and had his fears appeased. He watched her almost as if she had been his young sister, and Richard Ross her lover, eager to note if they met, and when and how ; but, as it happened, they scarcely met at all, she keeping to the sick-room above, he to the parlour below. As for Dick himself he became Val's slave, lifting him when he was first moved, helping him continually, indispensable to his invalid existence. He called for "Brown" when he woke in the morning, and ordered him about with an affectionate imperiousness which was at once provoking and delightful to Dick. But Val was much more mysterious in the looks with which he regarded Brown's mother. He did not talk to her much, but watched her movements about the room with a half-reverential admiration. "She will wear herself out. She is too good to me ; you ought to make her go and rest," he said to Dick ; but he was uneasy when she left him, and impatient of any other nursing. He half-frightened half-shocked Lady Eskside by his admiration of her. "How handsome she is, grandmama !" he whispered in the old lady's ear. "How she carries herself ! Where could Brown's mother get such a way of walking ? I think she must have been a princess." "Hush, my darling, hush !" said my lady. "Nonsense ! I am all right ; I don't mean to hush any more," said Val. "I think she is handsomer than any one I ever saw." This Lady Eskside put up with, magnanimously making up her mind that nature

spoke in the boy's foolish words ; but it was hard upon her when her old lord began to blow trumpets in honour of Dick, who took walks with him when he could be spared from Valentine, and whom in his enthusiasm he would almost compare advantageously with Val ! It was true, that it was she herself who had first pressed Dick's claims upon him ; but with Val just getting better, and doubly dear from that fact, who could venture to compare him with any one ? She liked Dick—but Lord Eskside was "just infatuated" about him, my lady thought. "He reminds me of my father," said the old lord. Now this father was the tenth lord—him of the dark locks, by means of whom she had always attempted to account for Valentine's brown curls, and whose portrait her son Richard disrespectfully called a Raeburn. She gave a little gulp of self-control when she heard these words. "Make no comparisons," she cried, "or you'll make me like the new boy less, because I love the old one more. To me there will never be any one in the world like my Val." Lord Eskside shrugged his old shoulders, and went out for another walk with Dick.

At last the day arrived when Valentine was pronounced well enough to have the great disclosure made to him. For two or three days in succession he had been brought down-stairs and had enjoyed the sight of the old world he knew so well, the river and the trees seen from the window, and the change, with all the delight of convalescence. And wonderfully sweet, and imperious, and seductive he was to them all, in that moment while still he did not know, holding his *levée* like a sovereign, not enduring any absence. On that important morning when the secret was to be disclosed to him, he noted with his usual imperious friendliness the absence of "Brown's mother" from the

group that gathered round him, and sent Dick off for her at once. "Unless she is resting she must come. Ask her to come; why should she be left out?" said Val, in his ignorance; which made the others look at each other with wondering eyes. She came in at Dick's call, and seated herself behind backs. She had put off her nursing dress, and wore the black gown and white net kerchief on her fine head, which added so much to the impressive character of her beauty. Amid all these well-born people there was no face in itself so striking and noble. The Rosses were all quite ordinary, except Val, who had taken his dark beauty from her. She, poor ignorant creature, made up of impulses, without a shadow of wisdom or even good sense about her, looked like a dethroned queen among them: which shows, after all, how little looks matter—an argument which would be very powerful if it were not so utterly vain.

"Val," said Lord Eskside, who was the spokesman, as became his position, "I hope you are getting back your strength fast. The doctor tells us we may now make a disclosure to you which is very important. I do not know how you will take it, my boy; but it is so great, and of so much consequence, that I cannot keep it from you longer. Val——"

"Is it something about Violet?" said Valentine, the little colour there was paling out of his face.

"About—whom?"

"About Violet," he repeated, with a stronger voice. "Listen, sir; let me speak first;" and with the sudden flush of delicate yet deep colour which showed his weakness, Val raised his head from the sofa, and swung his feeble limbs, which looked so preternaturally long, to the ground. "I have not said anything about her while I have been ill, but it is not because I forgot. Grandfather, Violet and I made up our

minds to marry each other before that confounded election. If her father did write that letter, it's not her fault; and I can't go on, sir, now I've come to myself, not another day, without letting you know that nothing, nothing in the world can make me change to Vi!"

There was a pause of astonishment so great that no one knew what to say: this sudden introduction of a subject altogether new and unsuspected bewildered the others, whose minds were all intent on one thing. Val was as one-idea'd as they were; but his idea was not their idea; and the shock of this encounter jarred upon them, so curiously sudden and out of place it seemed. Lady Eskside, who sat close by him, and to whom this was no revelation, was more jarred even than the rest. She put her fine old ivory hand on his arm, with an impatient grasp. "This is not the question—this is not the question," she said.

Val looked round upon them all, and saw something in their looks which startled him too. He put back his legs upon the sofa, and the flush gradually went off his cheek. "Well," he said, "well; whatever it is I am ready to know it—so long as I make sure that you've heard me first."

"Valentine," said his father, "at your age some such piece of foolishness always comes first; but this time you have got to see the obverse of the medal—the other end of all this enthusiasm. It is my story, not your own, that you have to think of. Kind friends of course have told you——"

"Richard," said Lord Eskside, "this is not the way to enter upon a subject so important. Let me speak. He knows my way best."

Richard turned away with a short laugh—not of amusement indeed, but full of that irritated sense of incongruity which gives to anger a kind of fierce amusement of its own. Lord Eskside cleared his throat—he

preferred to have the matter in his own hands.

"Friends have told you little," he said; "but an enemy, Val, the enemy whose daughter you have just told us you want to marry—but that's neither here nor there—let you know the story. Your father there, Richard Ross, my son, married when he was young and foolish like you. It was not an equal marriage, and the—lady—took some false notion into her head, I know not what, and left him—taking her two babies with her, as you have heard. These two babies," said the old lord, once more clearing his throat, "were your brother and you—so much as this you know."

Here he stopped to take breath; he was gradually growing excited and breathless in spite of himself.

"We could not find you, though we did our best. We spared no trouble, either before you were brought home or after. Now, my boy, think a little. It is a very strange position. You have a brother somewhere in the world—the same flesh and blood, but not like you; a mother—" He instinctively glanced at the woman who sat behind backs, like a marble statue, immovable. The crisis became too painful to them all. There was a stir of excitement when Lord Eskside came to this pause. His wife put her hand on his, grasping it almost angrily in the heat of suspense. Richard Ross began to pace about the room with restless passion.

"Go on, oh, go on!" cried my lady, 'with a querulous quiver in her voice. I am not sure that the old lord, though so much excited himself, had not a certain pleasure in thus holding them all hanging on his breath.

"In good time—in good time," he said. "Valentine, it may be a shock to you to find out these relations; it cannot be but a great surprise.

You are not prepared for it—your mind is full of other things—"

"For God's sake, sir," cried Richard, "do not drive us all mad! Valentine, make up your mind for what you have to hear. Your mother is found—"

"And your brother," cried Lady Eskside, rushing in unconsciously as the excitement grew to a crisis. "Your brother, too! Oh, my boy, bear up!"

Dick had been standing by, listening with I know not what fire in his heart: he could bear it no longer. The shock and suspense, which were as great to him as to Valentine, had not been broken in his case by any precautions; and it hurt his pride bitterly on his mother's account as well as his own, that the knowledge of them should be supposed such a terrible blow to Val. He stepped forth into the middle of the room (his own room, in which they made so little of him), his honest face glowing, his fair, good-humoured brows bent, almost for the first time in his life,—

"Look here," he said, hoarsely; "there is more than him to be thought of. If it's hard upon him, he's a man, and he'll bear it like a man. Mr Ross, look here. I'm Dick Brown, sir, your humble servant; I'm the lad you made a man of, from the time we were boys till now. You've done for me as the Bible says one brother should do for another," said Dick, the tears suddenly starting into his eyes, and softening his voice, "without knowing; and now they say we're brothers in earnest. Perhaps you'll think it's poor news; as for me, I don't mind which it is—your brother or your servant," said Dick, his eyes shining, holding out both his hands; "one way or other, I couldn't think more of you than I do now."

Valentine had been lying motionless on his sofa looking from one

to another with large and wondering eyes. It is needless to say that amid so many different narrators he had already divined, even before Dick spoke, the solution of this mystery ; and it had given him sufficient shock to drive the blood back wildly to his heart. But he had time to *prendre son parti*, and he was too much of a man not to bear it like a man, as Dick said. When his new brother held out his hands, a sudden suffusion of colour came to Val's face, and a smile almost of infantile sweetness and weakness. He took Dick's hands and pulled himself up by them, grasping them with an eager pressure ; then changing, in his weakness, took Dick's arm, upon which he leant so heavily that the young man's whole heart was moved. Familiar tenderness, old brotherhood, and that depth of absolute trust which no untried affection can possess, were all involved in the heavy pressure with which Val leant on Dick's arm ; but he did not say anything to him. His eyes went past Dick to the other side of the room, whither he walked feebly leaning on his brother's arm. When they came in front of their mother the two young men stopped. With her old abstracted gaze modified by an indescribable mixture of terror and longing, she turned to them, pushing back her chair unconsciously, almost retreating as they approached. Val could not speak all at once. He looked at her eagerly, tenderly. "Is it true?" he said ; "are you my—mother?" The words were spoken slowly one by one, and seemed to tingle through the air *staccato*, like notes of music. All the others turned towards this central scene. Lady Eskside sat leaning forward in her chair, crying to herself, her streaming eyes fixed upon them. The old lord walked to the window, and, turning his

back, looked out fiercely from under his shaggy eyebrows. Dick, supporting his brother on his arm, stood very erect and firm, while Val wavered and swayed about in his weakness. One great tear ran slowly down Dick's cheek. They were all spectators of what was about to happen between these two.

The mother stood out as long as she could, holding herself back, labouring to restrain herself. Then all at once her powers failed her. She started to her feet with a great cry, and throwing her arms round them both, pressed them together in a passionate embrace, kissing first one and then the other, wildly. "My two lads!" she cried ; "my two babies! my children—my own children! Only for once,—only for this one time!"

"Mother!" cried Val, faintly, dropping on the floor in his weakness, and drawing her into her seat. And there he lay for another moment, his head upon her breast, his arms round her. Her face was like the face of a saint in ecstasy. She pressed his dark curls against her bosom and kissed them, lifting the heavy locks up one by one—her eyes brimming with great tears which did not fall—saying again and again, under her breath, "For once—only for this once!" while Dick stood over them, sobbing, guarding them, as it seemed, from all other contact. I do not know how many seconds of vulgar time this lasted. It was, and it was over. Suddenly she raised Valentine from her lap, and loosened his arms. "Dick, put him back upon the sofa ; he's overdone," she said, putting him into his brother's charge : and then with a longing look after the two, she turned suddenly, subdued and still, to Richard who had been looking on like the rest—"now I'm ready," she said very low. "I'll go where you please. There is one for you and one for me.

I will never go back of my word to do you a wrong. It's good of you to let me kiss my lad once, only once. And now I'll trouble him and you no more."

"Myra," said Richard, coming forward to her. She had risen up, and stood like a stately wild creature, ready for flight. He took her hand in spite of her resistance, and I cannot describe the strange emotion, sympathy, almost tenderness, and hot provocation in Richard's face. He was more touched at heart than he had been for years, and he was more angry and provoked at the same time. "Myra," he said, "can you think of nothing but your children? Have you forgotten that you are my wife, and that I have some claim upon you too?"

She stood silent, holding back: then lifting her eyes looked at him pathetically. I think a faint sense of duty had begun to dawn in her mind; and her look was pathetic, because she knew of no response to make to him. She had no desire to humiliate her husband by her indifference—such a thought was far beyond her; but there was no reply to him in her mind. Perhaps he perceived this, and made a sudden effort to save his pride by appearing to ignore her silence. He drew her hand suddenly and impatiently within his arm, and led her forward to his mother's side. — "Myra," he said quickly, "it is of the first importance for your children—for Val and Dick whom you love—and especially for Val, the eldest, that you should remain with us, and go away no more."

Lady Eskside rose to receive her; they had met by Val's bedside many times before, but the old lady had

feared to say anything to alarm the worn-out watcher. She rose now, looking at her with wistful anxiety, holding out her hands. My lady's eyes were still full of tears, and her fair old face tremulous with emotion and sympathy. She took into her own the wanderer's reluctant hands—"Oh," she said anxiously, "listen to what Richard says to you, my dear! You will get to know us by-and-by, and find out that we are your friends—my old lord and me; but your boys you love with all your heart already. Myra, listen! It is of the greatest importance to your children that you should stay with us and never leave us more—and, above all, for the eldest—above all, my dear, for Val."

She gave one half-frightened glance round as if to see whether there was any escape for her. Then she said, very low—"I will do whatever you please—but it is Dick who is the eldest, not Val."

"What!" they all cried, pressing round her—all but Val, who lay still on his sofa, and Dick, who stood over him; the two young men did not even notice what was going on. But Lord Eskside came from the window in one stride, and Richard grasped her arm in sudden terror: "What is that—what is that she says?" cried the old lord.

"God bless *my* lads!" she said, gaining possession of herself, looking at the two with a smile on her face. She was calm, as utter ignorance, utter foolishness could be; then she added, with a soft sigh, of something that looked like happiness in her ignorant composure—"But it is Dick who is the eldest, and not Val."

THE LIFE OF THE PRINCE CONSORT.

, "To me, Biography, while one of the most fascinating, has always appeared one of the most difficult branches of literature," are the words with which Mr Martin begins the serious and important work on which he has been for some time engaged, and the first instalment of which he has just given to the world. Both of these opinions will be endorsed by the great majority of his readers. The art of Biography possesses all the higher attractions of the art of fiction, with that inestimable advantage of fact and reality which add a charm to every picture. It requires not only labour and patient investigation, but a power of insight at once poetic and philosophical, a faculty of generalisation, and of appreciating the minutest detail, which seldom go together. "To present a faithful picture," Mr Martin adds, in the admirable preface which he has addressed to the Queen, "of even the simplest life and character, moving in scenes with which we are ourselves familiar, working in channels in which we have ourselves worked, demands rare qualities of imaginative sympathy and perception. A life of action which has swayed great movements, or stamped its impress on great events, may be presented in strong outlines, and under such forcible contrasts of light and shade as will stimulate the imagination, and make the hero or the statesman a vivid reality for the reader. But where the inner life has to be portrayed, a subtler touch is demanded. We are a mystery to ourselves; how much more then must we be a mystery

to a stranger? There is infinite sacredness in all noble lives, such as alone merit the consecration of biography. Before it, those will bow with the greatest reverence to whom these lives are most intimately known. . . . How grave, then, must be his responsibility who ventures to draw for the world a portrait of one of its heroes, which shall be at once warmly sympathetic and austere just!" This is the important and difficult task begun in this volume; and we do not doubt the public will feel its full delicacy, and appreciate the success Mr Martin has achieved. Literature has lately abounded in the lives of statesmen—not always so well executed, or so conscientiously, almost devoutly, conceived; but no statesman even—hard as it may be to trace the thread of that more lowly individual existence which interests the world beyond the wisest measures, through the great story of imperial government and legislation—has a life so complex, so difficult to interpret, so public yet so secret, obscured by the very blaze of light in which it is placed, as has a great prince, seated, so to speak, in the very central sun of power and publicity. How little is even the much that is known of such a man as Sir Robert Peel! The great acts he did, the great speeches he made, the great share he had in the records of national and even universal history—how they magnify yet confuse the outlines of the man! To know that he was fond of pictures, fond of a particular school of pictures, the possessor of the *Chapeau de Poil*,

the bestower of that roomful of quaint Dutchmen whom now, thanks to him, we can all go and study when we like, in the National Gallery, is about as much as the general mind can identify of him. We remember distinctly when that great man lay dying, all England listening for his breath, how the few words that found their way into the papers, telling the inability of the doctors to do for him what they might have done for many a meaner man, because of his unusual susceptibility to pain, touched whole masses of people to something like tears, and brought the man infinitely nearer by that one touch of weakness than all his laws and all his labours had done. But such a life as that of the Prince Consort is still more abstract to us than even his. The Queen's husband could not make a visit, could not ride out into the woods, could not plant a bit of ground, or play a piece of music, but we heard of it; but in the midst of all this painful light, who and what was *he*, the real man who naturally retired into himself in face of that blaze of trivial illumination, seeking the privacy of nature which is indispensable to every gentle soul, in a seclusion more absolute than other men? Generally we have little means of answering such a question. So far as ordinary kings and queens are concerned, there arises in the literary world after a generation or two has passed, a lively flutter of superannuated gossip, a resuscitation of that which quivered orally in the air during their lifetime, and which old maids of honour, old gentlemen-in-waiting, old royal flunkies of all degrees, have surreptitiously put down for posterity. Without meaning any discredit to these gossiping chronicles, which perhaps, after all, are in most cases the only seemingly authentic news we can get on the

subject, one cannot but feel that, however exalted may be the rank of the gossips, they still talk as their own servants would talk of them, as our servants talk of us, about their royal masters and mistresses, with, no doubt, much of that power of travesty which is rampant in the servants' hall, and which, we all find out now and then, gives the most curious grotesque view of our motives and habits to the little world which is edified thereby. Almost all that we know of the Georges, the most recent sovereigns of Great Britain, has reached us in this way; and, indeed, as literary talent is rare among crowned heads, and as few people seem capable of being brought into close contact with the royal class without having their own heads turned more or less, this, we presume, is about the only means we have, though an unacknowledged and perhaps illegitimate one, of knowing what manner of men and women in general are the kings and queens who rule over us, and set, at least, the fashion of manners and morals, if sometimes they do little more.

In the case of the Prince Consort, however, it is very different. The gossips are not yet free to let loose their flutterings about him and his ways; when they come, it is fortunate that we, or our grandsons, will have the means in our hands of testing these irresponsible narratives—a process which will be of much use generally to the historical student. For, in the mean time, a quite novel and very affecting source of accurate information has opened itself, strangely enough, in freshest, simple outflow of natural love in that most arid of all soils, the Court, which up to this time has been but little identified with family devotion and happiness. How it was that it first entered into the mind of the Queen to take into her confidence those

myriads of her unknown friends who are to all poets and artists their true audience, addressed through whatsoever means, and whom her Majesty possesses in larger numbers than any artist or poet can boast—we do not presume to guess. But now that she has done so, by that touching impulse of love and sorrow which would fain teach the very winds to syllable the excellences and glories of the lost, this revelation of a true, modest, and tender human life, behind all the splendours and publicities of royalty, has established for the biographer of the Prince Consort a standard of authority and voucher of authenticity which is beyond all cavilling. It is possible to imagine that this great advantage might, had the life itself been less excellent, have had its disadvantages—and that the close presence of one to whom the minutest details were precious, and the jealous watch of affection which would, no doubt, be kept over everything that might detract from the absolute perfection of the subject of the biography, would form as great a danger on one hand as the benefit was obvious on the other. The present writer recalls to his memory, with rueful amusement, a case in point. It was once his fate to be engaged upon a work similar to that of Mr Martin, though his hero was of much less exalted rank; and he had arrived at a critical point in his memoir—a time at which the subject of his biography had given forth to the world a production highly esteemed by one party of friends, deeply deplored by another. The production in question itself, and the opinions of both sides, had been set down by the writer in perfect simplicity of good faith; when—his seclusion was broken in upon by the arrival, in hot haste, of a near relative of his hero, passionately desirous to procure the deletion altogether of the

disputed document and all the circumstances attending it. We will not attempt to describe the scene that followed—the arguments, the entreaties, the threats, the prayers. We have said that it was with amusement that we looked back upon this terrible experience; but such was far from being our leading sentiment at the moment, when a mixture of alarm, dismay, impatience, and vexation drove all lighter feelings out of our mind. Mr Martin has had no such terrors to encounter. There are no gaps to be met with in his narrative. He has been permitted to trace the early initiation of the noble young man whose life he records—nay, may not we rather say of the noble young pair?—into that knowledge of public affairs and that prudence in dealing with them which are not to be acquired in a day, with perfect candour and freedom; and if there is little, almost too little, to reprove in this existence, which seems to have been regulated from its earliest years by the prevailing power of duty, this is not the fault either of the biographer or his sources of information, but simply the sublime failure of that finely poised and rounded nature to afford his critics anything to find fault with. This is made the more clearly apparent to us by the fact that Mr Martin's book will introduce to the English reader another figure besides those of the royal personages who occupy the foreground—a figure little known to us, but full of humorous individuality—the great Mentor of modern days, Baron Stockmar, whose chief object in life seems to have been to trace out every little flaw that might exist in the spotless coat of his royal pupil, and to find every possible fault in him that could be discovered by minutest investigation; but whose failure in finding material for his animadversions is as apparent as

his strong desire to keep them up. Stockmar, with all the will in the world to find fault, and a delightful pertinacity in lecturing *quand même*, fails, from sheer inability, to find grounds for his criticism; and it is not to be expected that Mr Martin, whose mission in life is not to lecture princes, should have been more successful. A being so perfect in temper, so self-controlled and disciplined even in thought, so blameless in life, and so wise in judgment as Prince Albert, is a rarer thing in the world than is even the very exceptional position which he held with such high ability and honour; and that is as much as to say that there have not been, so far as we are able to perceive, above two or three capable of a place by his side, through the whole range of history. The world often loves better much less meritorious men. It is slow to perceive the excellence which makes no brag of itself—rather, which obliterates itself to make room for others; but yet the admiration finally extorted from it—generally after long waiting—by such a character, cannot fail to be great and profound. Perhaps the great hindrance in England to the popularity of Prince Albert was the very absence in him of those faults, popularly supposed to be endearing, which princes, like common men, are seldom wanting in. There was nothing for us to pardon in him (except the accident that he was not an Englishman), nothing which we could look down upon with friendly toleration while we looked up to his elevated rank and place, nothing to disturb the fine balance of his qualities. Had he been a little foolish now and then, even perhaps a little wanting in his duties, it would have broken the perfection of outline, and reconciled us to his other superiorities. The public failed to appreciate him, because he was too good for it.

But now when all the frettings of life are over, and when the calm and perfection of things past have rounded that worthy and great existence, we begin at last to be ashamed of our trivial standard and mode of judging; and England, which, when it has become too late to gratify the living, never objects to make up, as far as she can, to the dead for her injustice, had already laid the offering of her compunctious, her tardy homage and veneration, upon the Prince Consort's grave, before even the details of his life were made known to her. These details, however, only widen and increase the impression of a virtue almost abstract in its greatness—justice, and wisdom, and purity scarcely specked by one visible flaw. When even the great Pedagogue-Counsellor is baffled, what can the ordinary critic say? The Prince's moral character is like the marble of the Apollo; it is all so delicately rounded, so finely developed, that there is nothing to lay hold upon; it is the Greek excellence of form and line transferred into the world of morals. He gives us "no handle," to use an expressive metaphor; there is nothing to find fault with, nothing to take exception to; and the public imagination unused to excellence does not know how to receive this, or in what manner it ought to conduct its dealings with the almost perfect man thus unexpectedly thrown upon his hands.

Mr Martin would himself be the first to acknowledge that the interest of his earlier chapter has been forestalled by that previous narrative of a young sovereign's love and happiness, which startled the world a few years ago by the simplicity and frankness of its self-revelation. No staid biographer, recording even those facts which set the commonest words aglow, could hope to repro-

duce the surprised emotion with which England listened to that tale from the lips of the chief actor in it—a tale which for the moment gave to all of us who are old enough a kind of half-parental relation to the young Princess—ever young in the recollections of that moment—who thus came to us with soft undoubting confidence in our sympathy like a child of our own. The same affectionate family circle which we first became acquainted with in that narrative, reappears again in this, but there are only a few incidents here and there which are new to us. Here is one pretty story, which we have not heard before, of the little Princess Victoria, for whom already, almost in her cradle, the young Prince, her cousin, had been destined, and with whose story his is linked and entwined in childhood as well as in maturer years. She was twelve years old before she was aware of the great fate which awaited her, and this is how the little girl received that astonishing information:—

“The Princess, having lifted up the forefinger of her right hand as she spoke, gave me that little hand (it is her governess, Baroness Lehzen, who tells the story), saying, ‘I will be good. I understand now why you urged me so much to learn even Latin. My cousins Augusta and Mary never did. But you told me Latin is the foundation of English grammar, and of all the elegant expressions, and I learned it as you wished it; but I understand all better now:’ and the Princess gave me her hand, repeating, ‘I will be good!’”

This charming momentary glimpse of the royal child, awed and serious in the strange shock of her discovery, is both pretty and affecting; but there is not much that is new about the boy-prince in his humble, cheerier home at Coburg, until he grows to man's estate, and the one personage who is new to us is introduced in

all his individual notability. To say that he is here first introduced to the English reader is of course a mere figure of speech, for the Correspondence recently published has already done so much, but to a very much smaller circle than that which the present volume will reach. Most people have been in the habit of believing, up to a very recent period, that the wise King Leopold, the far-seeing and much experienced uncle, to whom the Queen and Prince naturally looked up as their chief adviser, was the sole guide, philosopher, and friend of the young pair. But the introduction of Baron Stockmar enlarges the firmament. He had been the friend and counsellor of King Leopold for years before he transferred his care and regard to the interesting young couple in England; and we are almost led to suppose that the King of the Belgians himself owed some of his wisdom and power to this all-influential guide.

It is now evident at least that he was most anxious to secure Stockmar's services for the nephew whose lot it was to take up the splendid but difficult position on which Leopold himself had once entered, almost as if making an experiment for the benefit of its after-possessor. It was he who placed Prince Albert under the care of Stockmar during the Italian tour which immediately preceded his betrothal, and this, it is evident, with a special view to the young Prince's training for England. Stockmar had been, before this, introduced into the fullest confidence of the young Queen, and had spent some time in London with her, acting the part, if not of the *Deus ex machina*, at least of that kind of minor Providence which smooths down, arranges, and accommodates everything; the universal referee and manager, now and then to be met with in ordinary life, but whose functions are seldom compatible with

the severity of judgment and undisguised consciousness of leadership, which throw a vein of grave humour into the story of his relations with the royal family. His portrait shows us a shrewd, opinionated, dogmatical, but kindly countenance, more Scotch or French than German, rigid in superior certainty of being always right, and far too honestly convinced of this to yield to either King or Kaiser. Very likely the novel force of this quite unyielding superiority, so unlike the homage which princes usually meet with, told for much in the submissive respect with which all the royal personages connected with him—even the sagacious Leopold—seem to have regarded this remarkable man. His real mental powers cannot be adequately estimated from anything contained in this volume; for his letters are most frequently quite abstract, inculcating a high ideal of duty and moral excellence, but too didactic to disclose more than the curious importance of position which he takes as a matter of course, and which seems to have been equally as a matter of course everywhere accorded to him. His political insight, however, is vouched for by many competent judges; and so is the perfect disinterestedness which must have added so much to his influence. “C’est un original,” said Count Felix de Merode, “mais quel honnête homme!” “And Lord Palmerston, no friendly critic,” Mr Martin tells us, “paid him this remarkable testimony; ‘I have come in my life across only one absolutely disinterested man, Stockmar.’” This is very high testimony; and, indeed, disinterestedness is almost essential to the character of the high-toned, unbending, stiff-necked, didactic, but most anxious and fatherly pedagogue, who played to the young Prince the part of such a mentor as history rarely records.

The humorous side of his perpetual lectures and sermons, his unwavering certainty that it is to his own training and advice that his beloved royal pupils owe all their good sense and success, does not seem to have interfered with the respectful love which they bore him, or troubled his own circle even with a momentary inclination to smile. The whole history, however, of this connection, is a most convincing answer to those sceptics who may entertain doubts as to the potency of personal influence. Here was a man without, so far as appears, anything that could be called genius, without position or birth, which tells in Germany even more than among ourselves—a man who might have ended his days as the doctor of a little German town, oracle only in a village circle,—yet into whose hands the current of events which we call by so many different names, threw the very leading strings, so to speak, of Europe, or of a very important portion of it at least. Stockmar was anxiously critical of his young Telemachus when he first entered upon the charge of him. Here is his opinion of the young man during the first year of their connection:—

“The Prince bears a striking resemblance to his mother. . . . He has the same nobility and readiness of mind, the same intelligence, the same overruling desire and talent for appearing kind and amiable to others, the same tendency to *espèglerie*, and to the treatment of men and things in a droll and consequently often pleasant fashion, the same habit of not dwelling long on a subject. . . . Great exertion is repugnant to him, and his tendency is to spare himself both morally and physically. Full of the best intentions and the noblest resolutions, he often fails in giving them effect. His judgment is in many things beyond his years; but hitherto, at least, he shows not the slightest in-

terest in politics. Even while the most important occurrences are in progress, and their issues undecided, he does not care to look into a newspaper. He holds, moreover, all foreign journals in abhorrence; and while declaring that the Augsburg 'Allgemeine Zeitung' is the only paper one wants, he does not even read that."

Poor boy! he was but nineteen when he had those "best intentions and noblest resolutions," to which he often "failed to give effect,"—and he would have been a prodigy indeed had it been otherwise. But when we recollect that, not much more than a year later, he was the husband of the Queen of England, occupying perhaps the most difficult position that could have been selected in all Christendom for an inexperienced youth, the Baron's anxious incubation of his youthful character becomes more reasonable.

Here are a few scattered examples of the manner in which this constant care was kept up. Stockmar begins on the very day on which he parted from his Prince after the royal wedding. "Never lose self-possession or patience," he writes, "but, above all, at no time and in no way fail in *princely worth and nobleness*." A short time later he addresses him as follows:—

"I am satisfied with the news you have sent me. Mistakes, misunderstandings, obstructions, which come in vexatious opposition to one's views, are always to be taken for just what they are—namely, natural phenomena of life which represent one of its sides, and that the shady one. In overcoming them with dignity, your mind has to exercise, to train, to enlighten itself; it has to acquire in dealing with them practical intelligence and insight, and your character to gain force, endurance, and the necessary hardness. That for the present I have but little new to add to what, since I have known you more intimately, my heart has felt for you, but have merely to reiterate what I have already said, is a proof that the

estimate I had formed of you was correct. Never to relax in putting your magnanimity to the proof: never to relax in logical separation of what is great and essential from what is trivial and of no moment: never to relax in keeping yourself up to a high standard—in the determination, daily renewed, to be consistent, patient, courageous, and worthy."

And again—

"All those whose minds are warped, or who are destitute of feeling, will be apt to mistake you, and to persuade themselves and the world that you are not the man you are, or, at least, may become; and that people are not only entitled to rate you low, but even to treat you slightly. It is only love and loyalty that are keen-sighted, because they seek the truth. They find excuses only when excuses should be made; they only wait in patient hope for what can be developed by loving fosterage alone, and not even by that, until the time is ripe. Do you, therefore, be on the alert betimes, with your eyes open in every direction, and strive calmly, but surely, to form a just estimate of the minds around you. This done, to the pure in soul lay your heart open, and establish between them and yourself a relation purely reciprocal—love for love, warmth for warmth, truth for truth. Those, on the other hand, who are impure, keep at arm's length, and do this with proper firmness and resolution."

This is surely one of the most remarkable correspondences that ever took place between a prince and his adviser. Stockmar is as distinct and peremptory in his moral counsels, which often sound like commands, as if he were laying down laws for regimen and physical health, a realm in which a physician is permitted to be peremptory even with a monarch. Perhaps this medical absoluteness had something to do with his uncompromising tone of authority. He bids his pupil "never relax" in the high mental discipline he orders, as he would bid his patient recollect the rules and prescriptions

on which his life depended; and surely with admirable reason, strange and unusual as is the spectacle thus presented. The only drawback in it is the doubt that will steal across the mind whether the severity was altogether as wise as it seemed, and whether this tremendous strain upon the Prince's young faculties, thus kept at the fullest tension, might not have helped to sap his strength and weaken his life in later days. Perhaps a little indiscretion then—a little less strain of premature wisdom and self-control, might have been a cheap price to pay for a few more years of so valuable a life. But that is long beyond the reach of a peradventure. Unquestionably, from the moment of his marriage the strain was never relaxed for a single day. If he ever did anything that was less than prudent, neither public history nor private recollection seems to have kept any record of it. And while all interested in him kept him screwed up to this heroic point, his new surroundings and the country of his adoption showed no desire to make his work easier, or to smooth any obstacles out of his way. England, though welcoming him enthusiastically on the whole, took, with the curious spitefulness so common in such public events, a series of small revenges upon him for his happiness, liking, one would almost think, to show him that he was now in her power. His allowance was cut down by being made the subject of a party squabble—and no recognition of his rank as Prince Consort was accorded to him; so that, in all Continental pageants particularly, he remained "the younger son of the Duke of Coburg," ranking after ever so many petty potentates,—a humiliation deeply felt, as was natural, by the indignant and devoted wife, who, out of her own country, could not share her

rank with him. Then the royal household was in the most disorganised condition—a house divided against itself—under the sway, not of two, but half-a-dozen masters—uncomfortable, wasteful, and undisciplined; a state of affairs profoundly repugnant to the high sense of order and beauty, as well as of right and wrong, which was so strongly developed in the Prince's mind. Through these first difficulties, however, he was helped not only by the counsels but by the presence of the indefatigable Stockmar, whom he had urgently entreated to "sacrifice his time to him for the first year of his life in England," and who accordingly resumed for a time that office of personal counsellor which he had exercised at the time of her Majesty's accession, steering his royal pupils through all the troubles of their beginning; explaining, arranging, smoothing everything, from the constitution of the realm—still, of course, practically unknown to the youth whose inexperienced feet had so narrow and thorny a path laid out for them by all its jealous precautions and requirements—down to that of the household, which was as difficult in its smaller way. The story of this setting out in life would be too heavy in its weight of responsibility were it not for the fresh atmosphere of youthful love and purity in which it is placed. The pair were so young and innocent that they faced their high but serious fortunes with the smiling composure of two children, irresistible in their union, and the mutual force it gave them. "He told me, if I continued to love him as I did now, I could make up for all," the Queen says, with simple youthful frankness; and there cannot be a doubt that his love and support made life to her, with all its great and overwhelming responsibilities, as simply happy as if she had been the young

wife of romance in a rose-covered cottage. Thus, both of them under twenty-one, they set out upon their life.

In the midst of our present national prosperity and calm, it is curious to realise that thirty years ago there could have been so many threatenings and clouds upon the national firmament. The reader who is too young to recollect, or who has forgotten the vicissitudes of these years, will, we can scarcely doubt, feel something of a shock when he meets with so many intimations of public danger and anxiety. Distance, which so often "orbs into a perfect star" the past which was less perfect to our perceptions "when we walked therein," has often in the larger field of history a contrary effect, making apparent the existence of perils we were quite unconscious of; like the mouths of Hell and terrible pitfalls which the morning light revealed to the pilgrim, though he had passed them safely unconscious in the friendly shadow of the night. Perhaps this peaceable present in which we live so quietly, fearing little except that over-peace, wealth, and wellbeing may lull us into over-security, may show—as indeed we are sometimes warned it will—like pitfalls to the eye which surveys it twenty years hence; but certainly, in some points at least, we have outlived dangers which were threatening enough in 1840. It seems half ludicrous, for instance, to think of Chartism now as a real risk for the country, even to those who remember the excitements it caused, and very difficult to realise the possibility of political insurrection on English ground. Yet such things existed. "Attempted risings in Wales"—"seditious occurrences in Birmingham"—"general stagnation of trade"—"discontent among the labouring classes,"—are threatening words

which meet our eyes upon one single page, as we open the book at random. Besides these internal troubles, too, there was more than enough to call for anxiety all around. Ireland was rampant under O'Connell with a force of complaint which indeed continues still, but which tells less powerfully now that we are more aware of its chronic character. France, a peril still more strange to think of, was meditating wrongs and invasions, and threatening from the other side of the Channel. The disastrous Affghan war was going on in India; Canada had revolted not long before, and was just subsiding after that tempest. So there was no tameness of universal peace and prosperity in the empire when the young royal pair set out upon their early career, but clouds everywhere, and storms threatening. It was not according to the constitution of England that they should be able to take any initiative in dispersing these clouds. Theirs was that passive rôle which is often more difficult, and almost always more irksome, than any other. What they had to do, and especially what Prince Albert had to do, was to stand by and prevent hindrance while others acted, rather than to act himself. He took up this part from the beginning, with an understanding of it which was wonderful in so young a man, and heroically taught himself to comprehend, to appreciate, silently and steadfastly to further, the aims of Government, without interfering, without intruding, without any attempt to grasp at power, and, on the other hand, without a vestige of that meaner spirit which would hamper others in acting, because it is not allowed to act itself. This curious and often painful position might very easily be made hateful and insupportable; he made it dignified and noble. By keeping strictly within his part, doing his duty and

no more, restraining personal inclinations, and loyally carrying out the spirit as well as the letter of the law, he made his no-power into a genuine potency of influence, and gained for himself, by never seeking it, a truly royal standing, royal in the best and highest sense of the word—as the constitution of England defines it, but as, perhaps, no monarch has ever so fully understood it before. He gained for the Crown not indeed a vote, but a voice—not the authority which is against our laws, but the opinion which is in full harmony with them, and which makes a wise sovereign the best Privy Councillor of his Ministers. How he did this the reader will learn in Mr Martin's valuable narrative, in full detail of the men and the measures through whom, and by whom, Prince Albert gained his real place in the world. From the first, the hereditary wisdom and political sagacity of his Coburg blood seem to have inspired him with just perceptions of what that place was. He does not appear ever to have been so dazzled by his elevation as to have forgotten or mistaken its limits,—a wonderful thing to say of a youth little more than twenty. No doubt Prince Albert's foreign breeding, and the perception naturally conveyed by it of all the risks of popular outbreak—risks which scarcely affect the English mind, secure in the centuries of quiet which have been our insular lot—must have often tempted him to interference; but he never did interfere; and no greater testimony could be borne to the innate wisdom—a quality distinct from intellect, and often independent of it—the sound judgment, and prevailing dutifulness, of the young stranger's mind.

The first evidence of this was given by the pains he took to smooth away all obstacles from a necessary change of Ministry, though

it was the tried and favourite counsellor of the Queen, and his own partisan, Lord Melbourne, who was to give place to his (apparent) opponent and adversary, Sir Robert Peel—by whose means it was that the Prince's income had been reduced, and his advent in England attended by at least some discouraging circumstances. Mr Martin refers to an amusing incident, the one little outbreak of girlish self-will and petulance which proved to the world that Queen Victoria, in all her youthful self-possession and seriousness, was only eighteen after all, which the middle-aged reader will recollect. It was very wrong, no doubt, and unconstitutional, to keep a Ministry in office, and nullify a Parliamentary revolution because a girlish Majesty refused to part with her bedchamber-women; but the little episode is an agreeable break upon the stately level of history, and affords us the luxury of a smile, for which we may be grateful, without any very terrible alarm as to the unconstitutional character of the event. The Prince, however, took care that no other vagary of the kind should break the solemn gravity of imperial life. Sir Robert Peel succeeded Lord Melbourne with all the decorum which became such a change; and before long the royal pair found in the Tory Government friends as devoted and as congenial as they had found among the more familiar Liberals; and when the moment came for another change, they regretted Sir Robert and Lord Aberdeen as warmly as they had regretted Lord Melbourne—a very pleasant testimony to both parties concerned. Sir Robert, Mr Martin informs us, was embarrassed at first in his personal intercourse with the Prince by the uncomfortable recollection that a party exigency had beguiled him into supporting the curtailment of the Con-

sort's income; but it need not be said that Prince Albert was much too true a gentleman to show the least consciousness of this fact, or to allow it in the smallest degree to influence his reception of the new Minister. That Sir Robert formed the highest opinion of his powers and character is evident; he described him to Lord Kingsdown as "one of the most extraordinary young men he had ever met with;" and, with a promptitude and gracefulness of appreciation peculiar to that great Minister, showed his admiration by immediately casting about for an office which would be at once honourable to the Prince and afford him an opportunity of proving his ability to the world. This was attained by placing him at the head of a Royal Commission for the encouragement of the fine arts, composed of the most distinguished men in England irrespective of party—a position and associates especially agreeable to the Prince. The immediate object of this Commission was the decoration of the Houses of Parliament, then newly built; and its first act was one of a most novel and interesting character, which has not indeed borne very much fruit, but which, we suppose, only a failure in great original talent at the time could have made comparatively without importance in the history of Pictorial Art. The Commission offered prizes for Cartoons on subjects illustrative of English History and Poetry, by means of which it was proposed to select the best artists for the frescoes with which the new legislative palace was to be decorated. The idea of such a competition was worthy of the days when schools of painting were great and important institutions. The drawings were exhibited in Westminster Hall in July 1843, and were visited by crowds of people. We believe, if our memory serves

us, that Mr Edward Armytage and Mr G. H. Watts were first brought into note by this exhibition; but it had not the effect of bringing many unknown painters within the knowledge of those whose fiat is fame, as had been hoped—and the frescoes of the Houses of Parliament fell into experienced and well-known hands, no young genius having seized this opportunity to take the world by storm. But the idea belonged to those splendid days when Art found greater scope than it has ever found in England, and but for the failure of nature ought to have produced a splendid result.

This, however, was the beginning of Prince Albert's connection with the Arts in England, which henceforward became one of the specially recognised spheres in which his activity found a certain vent. The same may be said of music (if that can be separated from its sister arts), in which he was himself a proficient. The list of the music performed under his arrangement at the Concerts of Ancient Music, of which he early assumed the guidance, will prove how excellent was his taste, and how noiselessly, in this quite unobtrusive and unremarked way, his mind has affected the mind of England; for no one can entertain any doubt as to the striking improvement in this particular in the public appreciation during the last thirty years. The wonderful crowds which we see flocking to almost every good performance of classic music is an unmistakable symptom of this difference, brought about quite silently, without any demonstration, and penetrating even, heaven be praised, into drawing-rooms where once every school-girl was considered at liberty to torture the ears and the feelings of her mother's guests; but where it begins now to be recognised as a rule that those should sing or play who can, and that those who

cannot should display the gift of silence, a much more edifying accomplishment. There is a touching little story told in this volume of the place which music held in the Prince's own life—an anecdote full of suggestion, which tells much, simply by what it does not tell, of that hidden thread of melancholy which runs through almost all great lives, and of the wistful weariness to which music more than anything else often gives relief and expression. The narrator is Lady Lytton.

"Last evening such a sunset! I was sitting gazing at it when, from an open window below this floor, began suddenly to sound the Prince's organ, expressively played by his masterly hand. Such a modulation! Minor, and solemn, and ever-changing, and never-ceasing. From a piano like Jenny Lind's holding-note up to the fullest swell, and still the same fine vein of melancholy. And it came on so exactly as an accompaniment to the sunset. How strange it is! He must have been playing just while the Queen was finishing her toilet, and then he went to cut jokes and eat dinner, and nobody but the organ knows what is in him, except, indeed, by the look of his eyes sometimes."

The reader will find in this little subtle touch upon the unseen something which perhaps may go nearer his heart than a more important record. Those notes with their long-drawn sweetness, did they breathe forth into the summer air something which words were never suffered to tell nor actions show—the noble weariness of strength restrained, and all those generous longings and impatiences which duty, sternly sweet, subdued, but not without cost? Who does not know that "look in the eyes," which tells how even the most beloved and best understood have now and then a moment of escape from us—of wistful solitude which none may share?

Music gives, above every other art, except perhaps poetry, those wings of a dove for which even in the height of happiness, by moments, we all long and sigh.

As the years went on, the position assumed by the Prince became more and more important, and his weight of character gradually made itself felt and acknowledged. "I endeavour quietly to be of as much use to Victoria in her position as I can," he says modestly. It seems, after a while, to have been his habit to express his opinions, particularly upon foreign politics, to the Ministers with all the force of an independent and unbiassed observer, behind the scenes in every respect, yet quite untouched by personal interest, as he was. Many of the "memoranda" thus prepared are admirably clear, lucid, and wise. Here is, for instance, a letter addressed to Lord John Russell on the subject of Italy, then beginning to stir in the movement which has ended in her complete establishment as a nation—which defines a position for England in respect to such a struggle for freedom, finer and more imposing than anything our practical politicians seem now likely to hit upon:—

"England has by her own energies, and the fortunate circumstances in which she has been placed, acquired a start in civilisation, liberty, and prosperity over all other countries. Her popular institutions are most developed and perfected; and she has run through a development which the other countries will yet in succession have to pass through. England's mission, duty, and interest is to put herself at the head of the diffusion of civilisation and the attainment of liberty. Let her mode of acting, therefore, be that of fostering and protecting every effort made by a State to advance in that direction, but not of pressing upon any State an advance which is not the result of its own impulse. Civilisation and liberal insti-

tutions must be of organic growth and of national development, if they are to prosper and lead to the happiness of a people. Any stage in that development missed, any jump made in it, is sure to lead to confusion, and to retard that very development which we desire. Institutions not answering the state of society for which they are intended *must work ill*, even if those institutions should be better than the state that society is in. Let England, therefore, be careful in her zeal for progress not to push any nation beyond its own mark, and not to *impose* upon any nation what that nation does not itself *produce*; but let her declare herself the protector and friend of all States engaged in progress, and let them acquire that confidence in England that she will of necessity defend them at her own risk and expense. This will give her the most powerful moral position that any country ever maintained."

The ideal statesman, the king whom patriots have dreamed of, speaks in these words. Whether any practical statesman in these days would have strength and courage enough to risk the perils of this great position, and encourage any self-educating nation to "acquire that confidence in England," is another matter altogether. But it was not in Prince Albert's power to commit the country to any such practical step; and he did the best thing that wisdom can do for the active worker hemmed in on every side by the practical, in thus keeping before him the higher view of our national position—the ideal which, through the lower level of the actual, still keeps up its elevating tendency, and lends a hope of better things even to a tame executive. Mr Martin infers, though not very clearly, that the sage doctrine thus enforced of encouraging all natural constitutional action, but refraining from all attempts at unnatural or premature stimulation of them, had a practical effect in modi-

fying the mission of Lord Minto, who was sent to Rome in the troubled crisis of 1847. In a letter to Baron Stockmar, the Prince unfolds the same sentiment still more concisely:—

"I am strongly of opinion that England should declare betimes that it *will not endure* that independent States should be forcibly prevented from setting about such internal reforms as they shall think for their advantage. This appears to me the sound basis for us *vis-à-vis* of Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. We are frequently inclined to plunge States into constitutional reforms towards which they have no inclination. This I hold to be quite wrong (*vide* Spain, Portugal, and Greece), although it is Lord Palmerston's hobby; but, on the other hand, I maintain that England's true position is to be the defence and support of States whose independent development is sought to be impeded from without."

It is not yet thirty years since these brave sentiments came from the very steps of the throne, from a thoroughly peace-loving and philosophical mind. What a fire-eater would he be supposed who should venture to suggest now, that England, "at her own risk and expense," should defend any one; or that she "will not endure" anything that one of her neighbours may be pleased to do to another! So time changes, and opinion wheels about, even within the recollection of persons not at all aged. The generation before was of a still bolder mind. Is it the natural process of time, we wonder, which makes the national temper tamer and tamer, and lowers the standard of national friendships as the centuries go on?

As the Prince's mind expanded into mature development, and began to occupy itself with such noble subjects, his correspondence with Baron Stockmar was naturally modified to some extent; but the

position remains curiously unchanged; and even to a man capable of thinking and expressing himself with the weight and power evidenced by the extracts we have just made, the old physician in Coburg still extends a patronising approval, taking credit for his pupil's good sense and enlightened judgment in the most whimsical way. 'Bravo!' he writes on one occasion, "that is equity; it betokens sound judgment and right feeling. . . . This is my real reward for my loving and loyal superintending care for you, and for your Queen, as by your acts it gives me the conviction *that I have not merely shown you the right way, but that you are actually walking in it.*" The italics are Baron Stockmar's own. "Present my homage to the Queen," he says again. "She has written me a letter full of just such impressions and emotions as I could wish for her and for yourself." And here is a bit of advice which will show at once how high the adviser's aims were, and how perpetual and unceasing was the "superintending care" with which he watched over his Prince through all the developments of ripening manhood:—

"Nature has endowed you with the sharpness of eye to recognise the working of Nature's laws, their interdependence, and the ends to which they work; and the logical cast of your mind will secure you against the mistake so common to princes, by which they are deluded into the notion that they alone are exempt from the dominating power of these laws. And the influence most congenial to this great gift of yours, and best fitted to develop and strengthen it, will, as I have often told you, be *intimate intercourse with minds of a high order.* Only by the collision of mind with mind, which is not to be arrived at except by contact with men of mark, can you elicit those flashes of light which enable you to recognise new truths at a glance, and

but for which those truths would for many a day, perhaps for ever, remain obscure and consequently unrecognised. In this way your Royal Highness may often, as by an electric shock, gain impressions and glimpses of intelligence which expand the limits of your being, and raise you up to a higher state of culture. And having once more called the attention of my favourite (*mein Liebling*) to the best I know for him, I pass on to the details of the communications made to me. First, let me congratulate the Queen and yourself upon the success of your visit to France and Belgium. It was a perfect success, and therefore will be of advantage to you, as, indeed, cannot but be obvious at a glance. Let us pause to ask why it was a success? Because it was thought well over beforehand; because it was undertaken upon a definite plan; because that plan was *adhered to to the letter.* Let us make a vow to *carry out like things in the like way.*"

When, however, Prince Albert's mental activity takes a form which his counsellor disapproves, he is still more distinct in condemnation than he has been in his advices. In the year 1847, when the air was already full of the shadows of coming revolutions, and Europe was preparing for the catastrophes and changes of '48—the Queen and her family passed the autumn in Ardrverkie, on the shores of Loch Laggan. It was one of their early attempts to find a home in the Highlands, and it does not seem to have been a very successful one—for, alas! the rain rained every day, as it has a way of doing in the beautiful mountain districts of the west of Scotland. "The country is very fine, but the weather most dreadful," the Queen acknowledged, though probably less affected by weather than almost any woman in her dominions. "Whenever we stir out we come home almost frozen, and always wet to the skin," Prince Albert himself says; and the grouse were wild, and the deer "very hard to be got at." These melancholy surroundings nat-

urally stimulated the activity of thought within the royal cottage. Prince Leiningen, the half-brother of the Queen, was one of the party ; and the thoughts of the young men, both German princes, and interested above everything else in the welfare of their native country, naturally turned to the internal condition of that beloved but much divided fatherland. The great idea of an united Germany had already taken possession of their minds ; and the result of their many conversations on this subject, through the wet days and perpetual Scotch mists of Ardrverkie, was a 'Memorandum on German Affairs,' written by Prince Albert, in which the entire question was carefully discussed. We will quote one or two passages only, our space forbidding further licence, which will show the reader how the Prince regarded this important matter. After coming to the conclusion that "the uniting of Germany" has come to be "felt as an essential want by the German people," he goes on to consider how this desirable end is to be brought about.

"The question then is, Where are we to look for aid ? By what road is this unity to be attained ? And by what means, so as to be productive of permanent good ?

"It may be assumed as a general principle in the solution of all political questions, that the organic development of what actually exists offers a better prospect for the achievement of a future really healthy condition, than the construction of a future out of some abstract and therefore arbitrary theory, however closely such theory may approximate to the absolute ideal of perfection.

"The *status quo*, then, in Germany, shows us a multitude of different states, complete in themselves, with their sovereigns, governments, chambers, and international relations, and with their only points of union in the German Diet, as that was established after the dissolution of the Empire, and of

the partial Rhine-Bund as the representative of German nationality and unity. Its fundamental purpose was the individual independence and unfettered vitality of the separate states, combined with the advancement of the welfare of Germany as a nation. At present it is dead ; a symbol rather than a reality ; disowned as an authority by the individual states, and a by-word with the people for its inactivity and weakness."

After discussing the causes of this weakness, the Prince proceeds to show how the Diet is in reality not only the best, but the only way of preserving German unity ; and insists upon the urgent necessity of reconstructing and putting new life into it, some suggestions for which he puts on record. His conclusion is as follows :—

"The question next arises, How to give life to this scheme ? My own view is, that the political reformation of Germany lies entirely in the hands of Prussia, and that Prussia has only to will in order to accomplish these results. Prussia, by the legislative measures of the 3d of February, has placed herself at the head of the development of German popular institutions. Prussia has for many years stood at the head of the Zollverein, and on Prussia the political expectations of all Germany are concentrated. If Prussia were really to adopt the plan of reform here chalked out, and to carry it out steadily and fearlessly, she would become the leading and directing power in Germany, while other governments and people would have to follow ; and in this way would come to be regarded as one of the most important European powers, seeing that in the European scale she would weigh as Prussia *plus* Germany."

The Prince informed Stockmar of this "Memorandum," as he seems to have informed him of everything he did. "I have gone deeply," he wrote, "with Charles (Prince Leiningen) into German affairs, and worked out a plan for the regeneration of Germany, which I propose laying before the King of Prussia."

No sooner, however, had this news reached Coburg, than the much-trusted counsellor, himself a German, and deeply anxious on this subject, sent forth his condemnation of any such interference, fulminating in fire and flame. "While the disposition which prompts your endeavours in this direction has my warmest sympathy, I must nevertheless urge upon you not to carry out your intention," he writes, with a force which looks almost like a command. "The first thing in such a case," he adds, "is to know the subject thoroughly, and master it in all its bearings."

"Here, then, the question arises, Does your Royal Highness possess the requisite knowledge for dealing with the subject thoroughly and to purpose? and also such a standing-point as will enable you to give a practical application to your theoretical views? To speak frankly, I feel bound to answer both these questions in the negative. You left the Fatherland eight years since, and when you were very young. How could you have gained a thorough insight into things as they are, or into the country's present and immediately pressing wants? The bare possibility of such knowledge was denied you, and conversations with Prince Charles could furnish you with only very limited and probably very one-sided results. . . . With this doubt as to your proper qualifications on the score of intimate knowledge of the facts, goes the further apprehension that the standing-point which, as a German prince, you cannot fail to adopt in considering it, will present the subject to you in a cross light, and thereby lead you to distracted views and conclusions. In dealing with the German question, your Royal Highness can scarcely look at it from any other point of view than that of a German prince; and however acute and accurate your observations of all details may be, still they cannot possibly be seen by you but in the colours of German dynastic interests. And it is just this colouring which makes me believe it impossible your Royal Highness should rightly grasp and appreciate the actual present

condition and wants of the German people; and still less that you are able to frame any practicable scheme which will meet the exigencies of the case."

How does the reader suppose an ordinary young man of eight-and-twenty, conscious of high intellectual power in his own person, would receive such a check from any master, however prized? It seems almost impossible to realise the sweetness of temper and humility of mind which would accept it without a complaint, meet it with modest explanations, and even take steps to withdraw the document objected to. This, however, is what Prince Albert did. Without the least display even of wounded feeling he hastened to tell his critic that the Memorandum had been cast into the modest form of a letter to Bunsen, to be by him forwarded to the King of Prussia; but that on receiving Baron Stockmar's letter of remonstrance, "I sent your objections to Bunsen immediately I received them, and begged him to keep back his courier until I should have an opportunity of discussing the subject with you here: but it was too late; the courier had started that morning." We doubt whether there existed in the world, either then or now, another man of the Prince's age who would have replied in this way. It is perhaps the most extraordinary passage in this book, showing to us two distinct and remarkable human creatures at a point of contact as novel as it is wonderful. Stockmar is fine in his honesty, in his unswerving independence, in the curt and clear objections which he states so frankly; but not so fine as the noble young man, who, with all the self-belief of youth, as well as all the importance of his rank and position, to make him resent this lecture as presumption, bows to it

instead his lofty young head, almost with the respectful submissiveness of a child. We do not know where to find a companion picture to this quite original and striking scene.

Besides this very remarkable juxtaposition of the adviser and the advised, the most eminent Mentor and Telemachus of modern times, which strikes us as one of the most interesting points in the book, the reader will find great interest in the narrative, of a more general character, where it touches upon great political events too recent to have as yet died out of personal recollection. One of these is the crisis of the Corn-Law agitation, the much-discussed conduct of Sir Robert Peel, here set forth in a highly favourable light. The history of the *entente cordiale* between France and England, which the young royal pair were deeply concerned in cementing, and which brought them into close and affectionate intercourse with the family of Louis Philippe, is still more striking. The whole extent of this intercourse, from the happy meeting at the Chateau d'Eu, so naïvely and pleasantly related in the Queen's Journal, to the correspondence on the subject of the Spanish marriages, with which it may be said to conclude, is dramatic and attractive. The enthusiasm of the first meeting, the affectionate plausibility of the crafty old bourgeois monarch, the friendly, tender court paid to the Queen, in which respect for her elevated position mingles so prettily with the half-parental petting which an amiable old couple can so naturally bestow upon a young wife and mother, forms the opening chapter. Then comes the return visit with its effusive domesticities—all so plausible, so honest, so friendly—until the whole pleasant delusion is suddenly interrupted by the announcement of

the marriage, which, in the teeth of all his promises, pledges, and amiable affectionateness, the wily old plotter had been bringing about behind backs all the time. We fear that in our present calm indifference to foreign proceedings it will scarcely be apparent to many young readers why we should have cared so much at that period about the marriage of the Infanta of Spain with the Duc de Montpensier; but the deliberate cruelty and secret ambition of the plot altogether, cannot but shock any one who enters into the darker shades of the story. A more tremendous example of the cunning which is so often mistaken for wisdom, and which almost always outwits and overreaches itself, it would be hard to find. The explanatory letter of the royal old traitor on the other side of the Channel—cunningly transmitted through the Queen of the Belgians, for whom Queen Victoria was known to entertain a warm affection, and who seems to have been worthy of all love—is of itself a most curious study. He is said to have spent several days and nights over it, in his anxiety to preserve the *entente cordiale*, and that private friendship which strengthened, or seemed to strengthen it; and it is a very striking example of the literature of apology. These laborious and prolonged explanations prove nothing, indeed, except the incontrovertible wisdom of the proverb, “Qui s'excuse s'accuse;” but they show the unity of human nature under the most extraordinary diversity of circumstances, and how much an accused monarch put upon his defence resembles the indignant scullery-maid, whom nobody ever suspected before, and whose outraged innocence is so wroth at suspicion. “Je n'ai jamais trompé personne,” says, with a similar whimper of indignation, the citizen-king; nor

does he omit that touch of pathos with which we are equally well acquainted. This accusation, he moans, is one of the "plus pénibles chagrins que j'ai éprouvés, et Dieu sait que je n'en ai pas manqué dans le cours de ma longue vie!" The "longue vie" itself is made to supplant the impression of our brutality and injustice. The Queen's reply is of a very different order of eloquence. It is as terse and full of force as the other is detailed and diffuse, and is very dignified in its grave indignation and pained yet self-restraining incredulity. The two letters are a fine contrast, all the more agreeable since the superiority is so entirely on our own side.

The volume ends with the gathering of that storm of rapid retribution which was not long of following this disgraceful act; and we leave the Prince in the midst of this storm, somewhat awed by the occurrences which are hurrying one after another, seeing the shipwrecked princes arrive, as it were, one by one, in every kind of pinance and unstable raft improvised for the occasion. A certain surprised gratitude and happiness in the steadfast security of this sound *terra firma* of England, which remained unshaken and unshakeable through all these convulsions, is apparent, with just a slight tremor in it as of danger escaped, in the Prince's letters of this period. He was not, all his courage and calm of mind notwithstanding, to the manner born, like the Queen, who, though she had just passed through one of the ordeals of a woman's life, writes to her uncle, "I never was calmer and quieter, or less nervous. Great events make me calm; it is only trifles that irritate my nerves." With these words the volume closes, a certain dramatic force in the situation having, no doubt, conspired in Mr Mar-

tin's mind, with circumstances of space and labour, to arrest the narrative just at that interesting point. "The time had come to put to the proof the results of the severe discipline under which he (the Prince) had trained himself since 1839," his biographer tells us; and we cannot doubt that the curtain will rise upon a scene of nobler activity still, and the ever-increasing influence which Prince Albert seems to have gained, in spite of all jealousies, the more he was truly known. That the public and the country will fully appreciate this instalment of Mr Martin's work, we cannot suppose to be for a moment doubtful. But those who understand the difficulties of the task, which are so many and great, and who know how hard it is to deal impartially with events so recent, and how nearly impossible to preserve in the features of a portrait the high ideal soul which life exhibits naturally in every changing glance and variety of expression, will give a still higher approbation to the result of his labours. All the interest attaching to the Prince's name, and all the sympathy, naturally still warmer and deeper, which surrounds, in England, the movements of the Sovereign still living, and long to live, according to all human probability, among us, only makes the work more difficult. Mr Martin has steered himself with great skill through the dangers of his undertaking; he has resisted all those temptations to flattery and adulation which would have been so strong to an inferior mind; he has written what is really contemporary history, without a word which can wound or irritate—a very great achievement; and his book cannot fail to increase the admiration and reverence of the nation for the great and dutiful soul who lived a life, obscured by its very greatness, in the midst of us, and who only now can be fully known.

THE GREAT PROBLEM : CAN IT BE SOLVED ?

DEÁNE HOUSE, Dec. 19, 1874.

[MY DEAR BLACKWOOD,—I commit to your care what in all human probability will be my last effort in literature ; and I do so, not only because to the care of your father more than half a century ago I committed my first essay, but because throughout that extended interval there has subsisted between your house and myself the most entire confidence and friendship. And I ask you to find space for my views, in order that they may obtain a wider and more attentive consideration than I might perhaps be able to command for them, were they put forth under different auspices. You will see, and so will your readers, that I write exclusively for those in whom, unfortunately for themselves, the principle of faith has been shaken. Happy are they who, with the simplicity of childhood, believe, and are at peace in believing, just as their mothers taught them. These stand in no need of argument to confirm an assurance which is already strong. It is not so with their less favoured neighbours ; and to them, therefore, the reasoning elaborated in these papers is addressed.

If one wavering mind shall be made steady by the perusal of them, or one anxious spirit taught where to look for rest, then will the purpose for which these pages were written be fully accomplished.

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It would be idle to shut our eyes to the fact, that in all the countries of Europe, and nowhere more strikingly so than in our own, a change has passed, or is passing, over the minds of the educated classes, especially among the young, on the most important of all subjects. Old religious beliefs appear to be losing their hold on men's convictions, and nothing is brought forward to supply their place which seems capable of filling the void left thereby in the human heart. This is owing, no doubt, in part, at least, to the misuse that has been made of the discoveries of modern science. We find that the crust of the earth is older by countless ages than the assumed date of the Mosaic cosmogony ; we discover traces of the existence of man long anterior to the period which chronology has fixed for the creation of Adam ; we have satisfied ourselves that Nature works by laws which are regular, uniform, and immutable ;—and we ask—some of us

in fear and trembling, others with a presumption which is perhaps as much affected as real—"What confidence can any longer be placed in the story which the Old Testament tells?" Nor is the simpler narrative of the New Testament, interwoven though it be with the most perfect moral system the world has ever seen, left unchallenged. Christ is indeed accepted by modern rationalists as a real personage. His identity is no longer disputed. But we seem anxious to bring Him down to the level of a highly-gifted man, whose claim to be considered, in any sense of the term, the Son of God, must be treated as the merest delusion. So be it. The cause of truth, or of what we are still old-fashioned enough to regard as truth, gains a good deal even from this meagre admission. If Christ really lived and taught as the New Testament represents Him to have done, there must be something in the Old Testament story which is not altogether

fabulous. For He undoubtedly connects Himself and His fortunes very intimately with the leading incidents therein recorded; and we but stultify ourselves if we speak of Him as at once the most perfect moralist that ever lived, and as one who founded His whole ethical system upon a lie.

It is not, however, to the misuse of the discoveries which have been made by modern science that we are disposed to attribute exclusively the hesitating temper into which, on religious questions, modern society has fallen. The misfortune—for a terrible misfortune it is—may be traced back quite as much to the dogged obstinacy of worn-out orthodoxy as to other causes. If our religious teachers insist still upon our accepting as literally true everything that is written in the Old Testament—if they will not allow us to apply to what is called sacred history, the same canon of criticism which we apply freely to profane history—and, above all, if, having invented a theological system of their own, and pronounced it to be from God, they cut us off from the pale of Christianity unless we cordially accept and unfeignedly believe it all, then is their dogmatism at least as much responsible for the state of uneasiness into which thoughtful persons are falling, as are either the flippant objections of Strauss and the philosophers of his school, or the more dangerous, because far more guarded, infidelity of Rénan, his followers and abettors. Nor, to confess the truth, does the position of the believer appear to us to be materially improved by the line of argument, if argument it deserve to be called, which Dr Farrar has taken up. In his interesting, and in many respects valuable, ‘*Life of Christ*,’ he looks at the magnificent subject of his tale through one medium only. Christ

is to him a hero, whose career he traces, just as he would trace that of Socrates or Alexander, relying absolutely for every statement which he advances upon the authority of the four Evangelists, and making no attempt whatever to explain the nature and main object of Christ’s mission, or to show when and by what means it was accomplished. We look upon this as a great defect in the work, which is the more to be regretted, because, in his preface, Dr Farrar gives proof that he is perfectly aware of the need of some such introduction to his wondrous story, and of his own competency to supply it. Let us not, however, be ungrateful for what we have got. “Writing as a believer to believers, as a Christian to Christians,” Dr Farrar has produced a narrative which is read now, and will continue to be read with pleasure and profit in many a Christian household. His style may be somewhat too flowery for his subject—fastidious persons may even say that he has diluted by unnecessarily expanding a tale which can never be made more impressive than as it is told in the pages of the New Testament. But he has done a good work notwithstanding—though it is not altogether suited to meet what is the crying want of the age.

Of ‘*Ecce Homo*’ it is too late in the day to speak either in praise or disparagement. The book has taken its place, and will long retain it, in English literature. And more than this. In spite of the somewhat extravagant eulogiums which it drew from Mr Gladstone on the one hand, and the carping criticism to which it was subjected by writers of inferior note on the other, it deserves to be regarded as perhaps the most effective tribute that has anywhere been paid to the ethics of Christianity.

No mean achievement this for any author to have accomplished. For though we cannot say with the poet,—

“ For forms of faith let senseless bigots
fight,
He can't be wrong whose life is in the
right,”

we accept with reverence the dictum of a far higher authority: “ He that doeth the will of My Father, will know of My doctrine whether it be true.”

Like ‘*Ecce Homo*,’ M. Rénan’s ‘*Vie de Jesus*’ has long passed out of the province of literary criticism. It has made its mark upon public opinion for good or for evil; and with persons capable of separating the wheat from the chaff in argument, scarcely more, we are inclined to think, for evil than for good. Admittedly it is the production of one who professes entire disbelief in revelation, and makes somewhat free with the historical authorities from which he quotes. But its general tone, when its author reasons, is sober, and when he pursues his narrative, it is grave and reverential. M. Rénan is no atomic or materialistic philosopher—he is too wise for that. He recognises in creation the handiwork of an intelligent and beneficent creator; and of Jesus, and of the religion which He founded, he speaks in terms of unqualified respect: “ By that (his perfect ethics) he (Jesus) founded as upon a rock the true religion; and if religion be the one thing necessary for humanity, by that act he merited the Divine rank which has been conceded to him. An idea altogether novel—that of a religion based upon purity of heart, and the brotherhood of man, won its way through him into the world—an idea so lofty that the Christian Church, using it well, can have no difficulty in making his purposes

plain, but which in our day only a few spirits seem capable of realising in its simplicity.” It is thus that M. Rénan speaks of the religion of Christ as it came pure from the hands of its author. Of Christ Himself he says: “ His glory does not consist in taking a place apart from history. We render to him honour more true when we show that without him universal history would be incomprehensible.”

It appears to us that such admissions as these go a great way towards helping the timid and the wavering out of the difficulties in which they find themselves immersed. Here we have the representatives of three antagonistic schools of thought agreeing in two most important points. The child-like believer, the philosopher who professes neither Christian belief nor its opposite, the open and avowed infidel, equally pronounce primitive Christianity to be the true religion; and all agree that Jesus, by whom it was given to mankind, is the one figure round which universal history gathers. What is there to prevent them from coming to a similar agreement on two other points—*i. e.*, that a religion so perfect must have emanated from God alone, and that its founder stood, and could not but stand, in such relation towards the Creator and Governor of the universe, as no other being ever stood of whom history makes mention? And if they meet here, why should they hesitate to go a little farther and inquire together amicably and in a candid spirit, whether or no the story which the Bible tells be not, after all, in every essential particular, worthy of universal credence?

Impossible, it will be said, because the story of the Bible is stuffed full of miracles and prodigies;

and of miracles and prodigies no philosopher can admit the reality. And if this difficulty could be overcome, there is in the Christian scheme, as Churches and divines expound it, so much that is derogatory to God's honour, and offensive to man's common sense of justice, that no sober-minded and impartial person can look at it except with aversion.

We have already spoken somewhat freely of that worn-out theological system, which revolts not pure theists only, but all thoughtful Christians likewise; and we shall endeavour hereafter to show, that as it is without any solid foundation in the teaching of Holy Scripture, so it need not stand in the way of the sort of inquiry which we venture to recommend, and from which we are sanguine enough to anticipate that good may come. It may be well, however, before entering upon this discussion, to notice very briefly the preliminary objection of all of which we are far from pretending to underrate the importance, though it need not, in our opinion, present an insuperable obstacle either to inquiry or to the attainment of a sober and just conclusion.

The objections to miracles may be summarised thus: First, universal experience is against them; next, they contradict the well-known and established laws of nature. With respect to the former of these objections, we may observe that its force is rather imaginary than real, for in truth there is no such thing as universal experience. Each man's experience is his own exclusively; he cannot share it with another. The results of your experience, when offered to me, are testimony, and nothing more, and I accept them as such if I have confidence, not in your integrity only, but in your fitness to deal with the subject under consideration. Moreover, if your state-

ments happen to agree with my own experience, I attach additional importance to them; but we may both of us be in error. The Indian prince who pronounced the European traveller to be a liar, because he said that water became at certain seasons solid in his own country, was justified by reference to his own experience. My father died before the electric telegraph came into play, my grandfather before steam was applied to purposes of locomotion. Had the one been told that it was possible to communicate with America in forty seconds, the other that the journey between London and Edinburgh might be accomplished in twelve hours, would not both of them have pronounced their informant to be a mendacious idiot? And am I much more reasonable if I affirm dogmatically, that because no real miracle has ever been performed within my experience, or the experience of any person with whom I am acquainted, therefore no real miracle has ever been performed since the world began?

It would appear, then, that the testimony of experience, though of unquestionable weight, is not absolutely conclusive on any disputed point in history. There may have been, in times past, causes at work which operate no longer, but which when in operation produced incidents which we call miraculous. Undoubtedly, also, no such causes may have existed, and therefore no such effects may have been brought about. But when we find ourselves obliged to balance probabilities or even possibilities, he must be a very inaccurate reasoner indeed who will not admit that the point at issue admits at all events of doubt.

It may be said that reasoning of this sort, however just under ordinary circumstances, becomes mere sophistry when thus applied. This is not an age of ignorance and idle wonder.

The laws of nature are familiar to all educated men, and we know them to be uniform and inviolable. But the laws of nature are not opposed to the combinations of forces, or to the results of such combinations however wonderful. The electric wire, for example, and the application of steam to locomotion, might not have been anticipated seventy or a hundred years ago. They were, however, just as possible then as they are seen to be now. But who will say as much of the resurrection of a dead man to life, or the blessing of sight bestowed by a word spoken on one born blind? These are effects which no combination of forces could produce. They are interruptions or breaches of the laws of nature, and we are therefore justified in pronouncing them to be impossible.

There seem to us to be two reasons why we should at least hesitate before coming to this conclusion. In the first place, the idea of law or laws necessarily involves the idea of an intelligent lawgiver; and to the intelligent being who gives or makes a law, the power surely belongs of suspending or altering the law, whenever such suspension or alteration shall appear to be desirable. In the next place, when we speak of nature and the laws of nature, we are prone to contemplate only that portion of the universe of which our senses can take cognisance. But the universe does not consist exclusively of visible and tangible objects. There is a world of mind as well as a world of matter; nor can it be doubted that the one is just as much subject to law—that is, to the control of the great lawgiver—as the other. We address ourselves, it will be seen, in this latter proposition, only to those among our readers who accept the former. If there be philosophers in the nineteenth century who really believe

that the universe is nothing more than the result of a fortuitous course of atoms, with them we cannot argue. Law, without an intelligent lawgiver, is for us just as much an impossibility as it is impossible to take in the idea of creation without a Creator, though we are quite prepared to judge of the character of the Creator by the obvious tendency of the laws by which the universe is governed.

Nobody, we presume, will question the fact, that in the visible world the rule is order—producing, and intended to produce, the greatest possible amount of happiness to sentient beings; the exception to the rule, disorder, leading to an opposite result. This is indeed self-evident, because the multiplication of animal life is a multiplication of aggregate enjoyment, even though, in consequence of the arrangement, species prey upon species, and disease and death come, in one shape or another, to all. For disease comes but rarely, and death once for all; and both, as among the inferior animals they appear never to be anticipated, weigh but as feathers in the scale against the sense of enjoyment that springs from conscious existence. But happiness varies according to the place which creatures made capable of enjoyment and suffering fill in creation. Of the inferior races the vast majority look for nothing, care for nothing, beyond the gratification of their animal instincts. The few which are brought into intimate relationship with man evince the germs of nobler qualities,—of reverence, gratitude, love. But their love, reverence, and gratitude attach them only as individuals to their respective masters; they never rise as a species; they are manifestly incapable of rising above the level on which they stood at the beginning. Their condition is

therefore as perfect as the place allotted to them in creation will allow. They know nothing of moral good or moral evil; they fulfil the end of their existence in following the bent of their instincts.

The case is different with man. He has received from the Creator higher gifts—reason, freedom of will, and that which, in the absence of a more appropriate term, we call the moral sense. His reason, if it were of force enough, at all times and under all circumstances, to control his will, would, we may presume, instruct him where to seek for true happiness; and under its guidance he might discover that there is as much of wisdom as of philanthropy in the golden rule, which bids each of us do to others as he would they should do to him. His moral sense, likewise, were it always healthy, and in full operation, would restrain him from indulging his own wishes, if in so doing he ran the risk, not only of giving pain to his neighbours, but of bringing evil at some future period on himself. But are these things so in fact? Universal history answers in the negative. Man, wherever we find him, follows the dictates of his own volitions, and his volitions are acted upon neither by reason nor by the moral sense, but by the motive, whatever it may be, which presents itself in sufficient strength to his will. Hence the necessity of holding society together by laws of which it is the object to restrain one man from seeking his own gain or gratification at the expense of injury to others. Such laws succeed, though in part only, because they can deal only with overt acts; and appealing to personal fear, the basest of all motives, they are worthless to form the character, to render it generous and noble and true. But this is not all. The inability of human

laws to attain even the imperfect end at which they aim, is proved by the fact that, in all ages and in every condition of society, an authority superior to their own has been called in to sanction and sustain them. Religion is that authority. You cannot go so far back into history, you cannot visit a country so rude, that religion in some shape or another is not appealed to as sanctioning the laws and customs under which its inhabitants live. The laws may be bad, the customs odious, the religion a degrading superstition; yet there they are, all three side by side, just as they have ever been since the elements of society came together. Is not this, to say the least, a very noticeable fact?

Another fact connected with this part of our subject is not less noteworthy. Wherever the religious principle is comparatively pure, and its requirements are universally respected and generally observed, there the tone of society becomes proportionately elevated throughout. Wherever religion is a thing of forms and ceremonies, of times and of places, pressed for State purposes upon the multitude, and by the governing classes discredited and despised, though it may help the magistrate to assert the supremacy of the law, its effect upon the general condition of society is rather to debase than to elevate.

Apply this reasoning to the subject before us. We have seen that the power which governs the material world governs it by laws, of which it is the tendency to produce among sentient beings the greatest amount of happiness of which they are capable. Surely it is not too much to assume that the laws by which the same being governs the world of mind—in other words, creatures endowed with reason as well as sense—must likewise be such as shall bring within their

reach the greatest amount of happiness of which they also are capable. To deny this would be to attribute to the Creator a less measure of benevolence in His dealings with superior, than we predicate of Him in His dealings with inferior, beings. But the happiness of rational beings is advanced, not so much by an adequate supply of their physical wants, as by just such a moral training as, without interfering with the absolute freedom of their will, shall supply them with motives strong enough to create a habitual shrinking from moral evil, and a habitual preference for moral good.

True, it will be said, but in the exercise of right reason, men discover these motives. It may be necessary to restrain the wills of the ignorant and the barbarous by bringing to bear upon them the terrors of superstition. But men enlightened and accustomed to reason on all subjects stand in need of no such restraining influence. Exactly, therefore, as communities become civilised, virtue is cultivated for its own sake, and, for analogous though opposite reasons, vice is generally eschewed. Is this assumption borne out by the facts of history? We think not.

The world was certainly not barbarous nineteen centuries ago. Time and the course of events had raised it far above barbarism. Single families had long grown into tribes; tribes had long expanded into nations; and nations, acted upon by war and commerce, had become great and populous empires. One of these, more powerful than the rest, was supreme over large portions of Europe, of Asia, and of Africa. Wherever the arms of Rome were carried, there went with them the civilising influence of Roman literature and Roman arts. In her cities, and especially in her capital, refinement was carried to the extreme of luxury. What

monuments remain to command our admiration of the skill of her architects, sculptors, and painters, and of the painters, sculptors, and architects, who had preceded them! Think of the poets, historians, orators, philosophers, who flourished previously to the Christian era! How profound are their speculations in every department of thought, how near their approach to truth in many! Nor must we confine our attention to Rome and to Greece—Rome's instructress in philosophy and letters. Empires great in arms, in literature, and in arts, had risen and fallen in the East, long before Western civilisation came in contact with them. What was the moral condition of them all? St Paul, whatever may be thought of him in other respects, is a trustworthy evidence in this; and the statements which he advances in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, are more than confirmed by the writings of Juvenal and Perseus among the Latins, and of Lucian among the Greeks. How, indeed, could a community be other than rotten to the core where domestic slavery prevailed in its worst form, where the marriage tie was held in no respect, where the exposure of infants was habitual, and where for the amusement of the multitude men butchered each other in the amphitheatre? Perhaps the world was never more civilised, using that term in its conventional sense, than in the interval between the accession of Augustus and the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. Certainly it was never more steeped in corruption, which extended through all classes, making rulers venal, subjects base, crimes gigantic, punishments ferocious, destroying in individuals the very sense of shame, and outraging all the laws of decency and decorum.

Looking at the matter in this

light, remembering that there was a time when man's intellectual nature had wonderfully expanded itself, while his moral sense was utterly debased, the problem which presents itself for solution is this: whether is it more consistent with our notions of the wisdom and benevolence of the great First Cause to believe that He would look with indifference at the moral ruin of His intelligent creatures, and suffer it to go on; or that, as from time to time He adjusts the laws of the material world so as to bring order out of confusion, so He should apply to an evil which could by no other process be arrested, just such a remedy as He is represented to have applied in the New Testament? For what is the remedy? No violence whatever is offered to that absolute freedom of will which is inseparable from the nature of man; but motives are presented to him of sufficient force to outweigh, by the assurance of greater good in the future, the impulses which direct him to grasp at a present good, indifferent to consequences.

But why insist that in order to attain this end miracles were necessary? We admit that of all the moral teachers whom the world has seen, Jesus is the most perfect. But very much that He taught had been taught before He was born; and the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is inculcated by all religions, the most extravagant as well as the most simple.

We admit that the ethics of Plato, of Aristotle, of Zeno, and of Cicero are admirable. We admit, also, that both among Jews and Gentiles the belief in a future state was by the vulgar generally accepted. But what influence did the ethics of the schools exercise over the moral condition of mankind? and how many among the educated classes entertained any

belief at all in a state of retribution beyond the grave? The spectacle presented to our gaze at the period of Christ's birth is, as we have seen, that of a world sunk in the lowest depths of moral degradation. Religion and philosophy are alike dissociated from ethics; and perfection in literature and the arts seems only to give fresh zest to pursuits which brutalise. What takes place? At the very moment when this deplorable state of things has reached a climax, there appears in one of the most despised provinces of the empire one who gives out that he has been commissioned by God to reveal, not to his own countrymen only, but to every people under the sun, the true nature and will of the Supreme Being, and the duty which they owe to Him and to one another. But his mission goes further than this. What the loftiest intellects that preceded him guessed at, hoped for, and misunderstood, he positively and authoritatively affirms. With him a future life is no subject of speculation; it is a great reality: and in that future life all the inequalities which in the present perplex the wise and offend the good are to be made even. The individual in question sets about his task, the most gigantic that was ever undertaken upon earth, unsustained by any of the advantages which usually enable ambitious men to achieve or even to attempt revolutions. His birth is humble; he is poor—so poor that at times he hath not where to lay his head. His adherents are a little band of persons, scarcely raised, if raised at all, above the condition of peasants. The chief scene of his labours is the obscure district of Galilee, with occasional inroads into Judea, and visits paid at rare intervals to Samaria, and the hamlets and villages that touch

the borders of Tyre and Sidon. There he undertakes, by his own teaching, and with the co-operation of twelve fishermen, to change the whole current of human thought, not alone in his native country, nor yet throughout the Roman empire, but all over the world. The enemies of Christianity themselves admit that he succeeded. For though, so far as regards numbers, the professors of the religion of Christ be still in a marked minority when compared with the professors of some other religions, the influence of Christianity is felt, and felt for good, to the utmost limits of the earth. Is this the work of God, or of man? Could it have been devised, far less carried into effect, through the mere exercise of human ingenuity?

But the marvel does not end here. The author of this new religion, the founder of this new school of thought, is arrested in mid career and put to death. His religion, his philosophy, call it which you will, so far from dying with him, gains fresh vigour from the catastrophe. They who had been his companions in life declare that he is risen from the dead; that they had themselves seen him, conversed with him, handled him; that they were commissioned by him to take up the work of the world's regeneration where he had laid it down; and they take it up, and push it forward boldly. They make no secret all the while of the recompense which is in store for themselves and their disciples. In this world they must encounter shame, scorn, alienation from kindred, torture, death. The crowns reserved for them are in that future world, to impress on the minds of all whom they approach a settled faith in the reality of which is the one great end for which they live and labour. That a work of such stupendous magni-

tude, so begun and so pushed forward, should have come to a successful issue, may surely be described as, in itself, a miracle of miracles. We see in it, not civilisation prevailing gradually over barbarism, not wisdom shedding its light by little and little over ignorance, but the ignorance of this world literally and truly giving the law to its wisdom—the mean things of the earth acquiring a mastery over the great. Enthusiasm in a cause which men believe to be right will, no doubt, go a great way towards insuring success. But enthusiasm which is not sustained by something from without more powerful than itself—by military force, for example, or political force, or such moral force as superior social and intellectual station supplies—never carries those who are guided by it beyond very limited triumphs. The founder of Mormonism succeeded in founding one small state or community, which is already falling to pieces. The Agapemone embraced a single family establishment, and never went further. Mohammed, on the other hand, spread his religion far and wide by the sword; and the partial success of the Reformation in Europe was not achieved without war. Of the origin of Buddhism, and other ancient creeds, it is difficult to speak, because history is for them lost in tradition; yet, as far as we are able to trace them to their sources, they one and all secured their first impulse not less from the political influence than from the superior knowledge of their founders. But Christianity, which took its rise from poverty, lowly station, and the comparative absence of all that men usually regard as learning and genius, has in eighteen centuries succeeded in establishing a wondrous influence over the whole world of human thought. If this be the

result of human reason, unaided by something higher—it is of human reason acting in direct opposition to the teaching of experience and the common order of things.

All this may be admitted—indeed it is historically true ; but why, we shall be asked, insist upon believing the tale of the resurrection? If you speak to us of the immortality of the soul, we can take in and assent to your reasoning. But that soul and body once separated should ever come together again is for obvious reasons impossible. We know that the body which we commit to the earth or to the ocean decomposes, supplying nutriment to herbs and grasses, and through them to other animals, and among the rest to man. We know, also, that the matter of the universe, however frequently it may change its forms, has neither increased nor diminished since the universe began. How can it be alleged, in the face of facts like these, that the atoms of which any special body was composed, can ever be brought together again? You say that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and with St Paul you rest upon that fact your belief that all who now live and die—that all who have ever lived and died—that all who may live and die to the end—shall in like manner rise from the dead. But you scarcely do justice to your great authority, whose argument cuts both ways. In one sentence St Paul affirms positively enough “Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep.” In another he inverts the proposition and says: “If the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen.” This is very like reasoning in a circle, especially when we recollect that the resurrection of Christ, if it took place at all, took place within six-and-thirty hours after death—a space of time scarce-

ly sufficient to admit of the beginning of that decomposition which, in the case of men dying a thousand or even a hundred years ago, has dispersed the atoms of which their bodies were composed to the four winds. Is it not, therefore, more judicious to believe that they who vouched for the resurrection of Christ were themselves mistaken, than to build upon their assertion a doctrine so extravagant as that on which the whole Christian scheme is supposed to hinge?

We admit the difficulty—the enormous difficulty—of the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. Treated as popular theology treats it, the subject will not bear a moment's grave consideration. But is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul one whit more intelligible? What is that thing which we call the soul? Is there such a thing? Has it, at the present moment, an entity distinct from the body? Can we form any conception of the means by which consciousness of existence could be retained by it, were the link which connects it with the body severed? Constituted as we are, we know, or fancy that we know, how to solve the mystery of our being. We see with our eyes, we hear with our ears, we taste, we touch, we smell. By the exercise of one act of volition we lie down, by the exercise of another we rise up ; and we explain all this by saying that the same mind which receives impressions through the organs of sense, directs, by what we call its acts of volition, the body now to labour, now to rest. But what the mind is which receives these impressions, and exercises this power over the body—whether it be really anything distinct from the physical frame, and, if distinct, where it resides?—these are problems which

have never yet been solved, nor, as far as we can see, are ever likely to be solved by the exercise of human reason. And if the difficulty be thus insurmountable of arriving at a clear conception of the mode of the soul's existence now, how much more above our comprehension is the idea of the soul's active existence in a state separate from the body?

In expressing ourselves thus, we are not, be it observed, arguing against either the immateriality or the immortality of the soul. We firmly believe in both; not because we hold the one to be the necessary result of the other, but because the one is made clear to us by our own consciousness, and the other rests upon faith, having its root in sure testimony. But what we do not understand—and we defy the most ingenious of philosophers to explain it to us—is this,—How could the immaterial being which I call my soul exercise any of the powers that are inherent in it, if it were deprived of the organs or tools with which it now works, or of organs or tools of a kindred nature?

Lord Brougham, in his introduction to Paley's *Natural Theology*, has gone as far as man can go to meet this difficulty. He says, and says truly, that mind is just as much the subject of investigation or experiment as matter. He dwells much upon the evidence of consciousness—which identifies the full-grown man with the infant—on the mind's capability of exercising itself in mathematical calculations, in recalling events past, in forecasting the future—on dreams, as affording evidence that the mind never ceases to work, and that it can work just as well without the bodily organs as with them. And from all this he draws the inference that, being immaterial, the

soul is indestructible, and therefore necessarily immortal. But does not Lord Brougham's reasoning rest altogether upon a fallacy? Dreams come to us only in the brief interval which immediately precedes either our falling into deep sleep, or our awakening from it. In sleep, if it be healthy and sound, all consciousness is suspended. Undoubtedly there is suspension of consciousness in a swoon; and the patient who is under the influence of chloroform knows nothing of the preparations that are made for operating upon him, or of the operation till it is performed. As to the power of the mind to exercise itself in mathematical calculations, in recalling events past, and in forecasting the future, is it not entirely dependent on the healthy state of the brain? Puncture one cell in that delicate organ, or let an apoplectic shock fall upon the thinker, and where are his calculations, his memories, or his prognostications? On the other hand, consciousness testifies to the fact, that animal life is not, and cannot be, the mere effect of organisation. I who write these lines in extreme old age am conscious that, though every atom of my physical frame has been changed over and over again, I am the same being who, seven decades and a half ago, walked hand in hand with my nurse or my mother, and learned from both to express my wants by articulate sounds. But my consciousness teaches me much more than this. It testifies to the fact that the growth of my mind in vigour and capacity kept pace with the growth of my body; and if I live long enough for my body to become thoroughly crippled, others will see, though I myself be unconscious of it, that my mind "jangles out of tune."

The fact that the mind strength-

ens with the body's strength, and decays with the body's natural decay, admits of no question. Men struck down by fatal accident or acute disease, often retain their faculties to the last ; but of all who pass their threescore and ten or fourscore years, how minute is the proportion who fail to fall into a second childhood !

"From Marlborough's eyes the tears of
dottage flow,
And Swift expires, a driveller and a
show."

But this admitted fact supplies no argument against either the immateriality or the immortality of the soul. All that it proves—and this we think it proves to demonstration—is that the immaterial soul can no more without physical organs of some kind exercise the powers that belong to it, and not to the material body, than the watch-maker—in whom the power absolutely dwells—can make a watch if you deprive him of his tools.

Believing all this to be true, we seem to have no other alternative than to believe also that the soul, being immortal, must, on its severance from the material body, either become absorbed in the soul of the universe, and thus lose all consciousness of separate existence, or find itself "clothed upon" by another body, of which the apostle speaks as a "spiritual body." The former was the belief entertained by the most profound thinkers in the various theistic schools of Greek philosophy. We need scarcely add that it is the cardinal article in the creed of Buddhists and Brahmins of the present day. The latter is clearly and distinctly what is taught by Christianity. The former had no influence, and could have none, as a motive of action in human affairs. The latter holds constantly before men's eyes the prospect of a future life, which

shall be to each individual a separate and distinct existence linked to that which now is by the same chain of consciousness which assures the full-grown man that he is identical with the schoolboy. Nor is it any objection to this theory to urge, that such a state as we here imagine would be the result of a new creation. Why should it ? Our material bodies have entirely passed from us over and over again since we were born, yet our consciousness of identity has never been broken. Why should death, of which the effect appears to be to achieve in a moment what in life was brought about by degrees, destroy this identity ? If "the spiritual body" which we anticipate be not evolved at once, then consciousness is suspended. But consciousness has been repeatedly suspended in us all when we swooned, and when we slept the sleep of health. Why shrink from the contemplation of a more prolonged suspension — if consciousness be again suspended at the hour of death ? Sleep, when it is deep and sound, takes no note of time ; and when the process of "clothing upon" takes place, the interval between the loss and the recovery of consciousness will seem to each resuscitated soul to have been but momentary.

But it will be said, the resurrection of Christ, as it is set forth in the New Testament, was the resuscitation of the same body which the disciples laid in the grave. It was tangible, for they handled it ; it was a human body restored to life, for it ate in their presence. Is this credible ?

Why should it be incredible ? If the body of Christ risen was visible and tangible, it was so entirely at His own discretion. He is described as appearing and disappearing at pleasure—now in Galilee, now in

Jerusalem. Doors bolted for fear of the Jews can neither exclude nor retain Him. The change, in fact, which at death passes unobserved over the physical condition of others, passed perceptibly over His. "Sown in corruption, His body rose in incorruption; sown in dishonour, it rose in glory; sown a natural body, it rose a spiritual body." And for this there was a reason. The shadowy appearance to the survivors of one known to be dead, may startle and solemnise for the moment. Most of us, indeed, can vouch for the effect of such appearances in our dreams; some of us can even speak of them as visible in our hours of waking, but not healthy, consciousness. What then? The impression, however vivid, soon passes away. We awake, and lo! it was a dream; or we regain our vigour of mind and body, and recognise the delusion. Now, the Christian holds that it was the great purpose of this one exercise of Divine power so to stamp its impression on the minds of those who were subjected to it, that neither time nor tide, nor difficulties nor dangers, should ever

suffice to weaken, much less to blot it out. The condition of the tomb when visited by Peter and John—the renewed intercourse, by fits and starts, of the risen Lord with His disciples—His submitting the spiritual body to the test of their senses,—all these things were necessary in order to convince them that they were not labouring under any hallucination; but that He Himself, whom they had followed in His humiliation and to the death, was indeed alive again, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep. It appears then, that, accepting the postulate that, for a great moral purpose, the reality of a future state must be brought home to the convictions of mankind, there is not only nothing in the evidence afforded to that fact in the New Testament with which a reasonable man ought to be offended, but that any other mode of bringing the fact home to the conviction of all classes—the high, the low, the educated, the uneducated, the civilised, the savage, the full-grown man and the child alike—it passes the most lively imagination to conceive.

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GIANNETTO.—CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER VII.

WE were careful, before going, to leave our address in England with the Franciscans, the Matteis, and the Curato of San Jacopo, to whom I sent two or three envelopes directed to myself and stamped; and it was through occasional correspondence with all these that we heard enough of Giannetto and his wife to enable me to carry on the thread of their history.

When Fra Geronimo reached Venice, he established himself in the convent of his order, and set himself to watch.

All Giannetto's old passion for the sea returned when he again beheld it. In all weathers, at all hours, he was out,—now gliding along the silent canals in the smooth, swift gondola—now rowing far out of the town and beyond the wide lagoons, dancing on the waves, and feeling a wild enjoyment in his freedom. He was never still; a sort of burning, overpowering restlessness seemed to possess him, body and soul. He was always singing: when at home, bending over his

little child, he would sing softly and sweetly, till the tears welled into Elvira's eyes; when tossing on the sea, and the wind and waves were high, the passers-by leant forward with rapture, listening to his wild and thrilling tones, then drew back within the shelter of their gondolas with a shudder, at they knew not what.

Nothing seemed to affect his voice. When the violent heat came on, and the other singers at the opera found their voices becoming weak and hoarse, his was the same as ever—there was no variation in its power. After singing the whole night it was clear and strong as at the beginning. His fellow-actors became uneasy and suspicious, though of what they could not define; but involuntarily they drew further and further aloof from him, so that he and Elvira found themselves without friends, and with but few acquaintances, in Venice.

It was a calm sultry evening in July, and Giannetto had been out all through the afternoon. He was

weary and heated, and lay back in his gondola, leaving its guidance (not according to his wont) to the gondolier. As they glided through the streets, the strong smell of the almost stagnant water sickened him. "Hasten!" he said; "an extra *buona-mano* for speed."

The gondolier smiled, and bent more willingly on his long oar. "The Signore is generous," he said. "I was idle, I was not working with a will; but times are bad, and, heaven help us! we have become lazy."

"Times are always bad in Venice," said Giannetto, irritably; "it is always the same story with you all."

The man gave a little patient sigh. The gondola skimmed out of the Grand Canal, and stopped before the steps of a palace on one of the smaller canals. Giannetto paid him, and stepped lightly out.

It was a very old and crumbling, though once fine, building, this Palazzo Lucchetti, in which Giannetto and his family had taken apartments. One large room with hanging balconies looked on to the Grand Canal, but the long façade of the palace was on the smaller street. Beautiful it was in its decay, with its walls of great hewn stones, in which the rusted iron rings for torches yet remained. The posts to which the gondolas were fastened still bore the bright colours of the old family to whom the palace had belonged, and from whom it had taken its name; but the dark water scarcely showed their reflections, the paint was so faded away. Everything spoke of sadness and desolation—of a city whose glory is departed.

Giannetto mounted the broad white steps, passed through the small courtyard—where a few thirsty orange-trees drooped and pined for want of care—up a marble staircase, and into a suite of long

lofty rooms. They were hung with old, faded green silk; but the heavy stucco ceilings, richly gilt and painted, retained somewhat of their original lustre.

Through three of these rooms Giannetto passed, till he reached the furthest, that overhanging the Grand Canal, which was Elvira's favourite apartment.

It was nearly dark, the windows carefully closed with dark-blue blinds, excepting one which had been set wide open, and admitted a stream of almost visible heat.

On the floor in front of this window, and on the balcony without, five or six pigeons, beautiful in their soft opal plumage, were pecking up bits of bread and cake; and among them, with bare feet and shoulders, sat the dark-eyed little child, Felicità. The pigeons were billing and cooing all round her, some venturing even to hop on her tiny feet, causing her to crow with delight.

As Giannetto entered, Elvira came forward from the dark corner where she had been seated, and pointed to the child. "See, Nino," she said (for so she called him)—"look, Nino mine!—is it not pretty? The pigeons of St Mark love our little child; they come thus every day." Giannetto thought lovingly that she looked as pretty and as pure as the little stainless child; he looked down on her very fondly. "Alas!" she said, pressing her soft hand on his brow, "how it burns! It is too hot; you should not go out in the great heat on days like these."

Giannetto advanced to the little Felicità, and held out his hands. At his approach the pigeons took alarm, and began to fly out of the window. "See," said Giannetto, bitterly, "all good and holy things fly at my approach!"

Elvira hastily snatched up her child and held it towards her hus-

band, smiling. The little one put out her arms, and jumped to be taken.

"Here, Nino," she replied; "there is the best answer. Those foolish pigeons know quite well that a child cannot hurt them; but they have not the same confidence in a man. Sometimes even *persons* as well as pigeons think you rather formidable—just now and then," she added, her voice quivering a little.

"Not you, Elvira? You at least are never afraid of me?"

"No, no; not I. Why should I fear you? You are always good to me—too good by far; but others—I cannot tell why—many others think you much to be dreaded. But here is Manna: she has come to take Felicità to bed; she has not been well to-day. Nino, feel her hands and her little head; they are burning! And one little cheek is so scarlet, the other so pale! All day she has been heavy and sleepy, and, till the pigeons came in, she has scarcely noticed anything."

"Poor little thing!" said Giannetto, kissing the upturned face; "what ails my little one?"

"Ah!" said the nurse, as she lifted and carried the child away, "it must be her teeth. If the Signora would only let me give her some of that medicine I told her of."

"No, no; put her to sleep, Manna, and give her no medicines." The nurse left the room.

Giannetto had thrown himself down on a hard green sofa, and Elvira quietly seated herself on the ground beside him, holding and fondling his hand.

"Nino," she began hesitatingly, "you love little Felicità very much?"

"Of course I love her."

"Nino, you would not like her to go away, and never see or think of you again? It would grieve you, would it not?"

Giannetto started up, and snatched away his hand. "Elvira, cannot

you let me alone? I know well what you mean. When will you cease to plague me on this subject? I have told you again and again that these feelings of which you speak—these natural affections, as you call them—are those only of an educated mind. A peasant like my mother is not thus sentimental."

"But, Nino, you do not know, you cannot tell, what a mother's love is, and always must be. Educated! Why, look at the very animals, how they love their children!"

"Until they are grown up," said Giannetto—"till they are independent of them—and then they throw them off. Believe me, Elvira, your pity is wasted on my mother. I do not wish to see her; she would not care to see me,—and—and—I cannot go home."

Elvira sighed. After a little pause she said, gently, "Nino mine, do you not think sometimes that there are duties which should not be left undone, however painful they may be? Nino, she was left a widow very young; she toiled for you, suffered for you, wept for you; and—indeed, indeed, she loves you still."

Giannetto turned round suddenly—"How do you know? What do you mean? Have you heard anything? Answer, Elvira!"

Elvira took a thin, carefully-written letter from her pocket: "See," she said—"my mother has just sent me this; she writes a few lines herself to say that, as it was directed to me, she had opened and read it. But, Nino, Nino, what is the matter? Are you ill?"

Giannetto had become as white as a sheet. He had at once recognised the handwriting of the priest of San Jacopo. He snatched the letter from her; it was not long, and a glance reassured him—his secret was safe.

As he sank back, the drops of perspiration stood on his brow. "It

is nothing, nothing, Elvira," he said; "only a sudden pain. Read me the letter." Elvira was not satisfied till she had bathed his forehead with orange-flower water; and she sat fanning him with one hand, while holding the letter in the other. Giannetto acquiesced, willing that she should attribute his sudden agitation to illness.

This secret between himself and his wife was becoming unbearable to him. He lived in a perpetual dread lest Elvira should learn the particulars of his early history; and he felt a sort of conviction that, his secret once revealed, their severance would become inevitable.

"Now, Elvira," he said, "read me the letter. I wonder why he should write to you instead of to me this time?"

"Perhaps," she said, rather timidly—"perhaps some letter of yours has been lost. Indeed, so it must be; for he says they have had no news of you for very long. I will read it." She began—

"SIGNORA,—I feel that, without doubt, you may look upon my presuming to write to you as a great impertinence, and that I have scarcely a right to do so; but the very great interest and solicitude I have always felt for your husband cause me to beg for your indulgence. It is now a long time since I have received any answer to my letters, and I have no news of him to tell to his mother, so that she is breaking her heart; and for her sake I have ventured to appeal to you, who are also a woman, and can understand better than a man what it is to feel herself forgotten by a son for whom she has toiled, and laboured, and suffered so much. The last we heard of him was, that he had taken a wife, and that in you he had found perfect happiness. He also told us that he is not your

equal in birth—that you are a lady; and it appears to me possible, in that case, that you may be ashamed of the poor old peasant-mother, and wish to keep her son entirely away from her. Is this true? Ah! if God has given you also a little child, you will be better able to understand what her feelings must be; for she has been a very fond and loving mother, and for many years he was all in all to her. She grows old now, and is worn out with care and pining for him; and though you have both been very good, and sent her money constantly, she often says that could she see your husband once again, it would do her more good than all the comforts the money gives her. Can you not both come to San Jacopo? You shall be treated as becomes your position; I will see to that. Tell your husband that all his old friends and companions are well——"

"I had no friends, no companions," broke in Giannetto, angrily. "The man is in his dotage!"

Elvira looked at him in astonishment before she resumed her reading.

"Tell him also that, should he come, they will all welcome him warmly. Several changes have taken place. Pietro's wife is dead, the good Baldovinetta; and he has married again, old Masaniello's youngest daughter, whom we used to call 'Brutta e buona,' and she makes him an excellent wife. Tonino has been apprenticed to Andrea Castagno, and is a clever lad. Andrea kept on the new boat after his father's death in the great storm, though he was but sixteen at the time; and, by the blessing of San Jacopo, he has succeeded very well. I have employed the last sum of money your husband sent in buying for Carola that large

vigna behind the place where old Nicolo's cottage stood, that was washed away; and she hires his son, Ceccho, to cultivate it, and keeps a mule of her own. It is her one happiness to think that all these riches came from her beloved son; but one moment's sight of him in his own person would be the richest gift he could bestow upon her—and she wearies Madonna to grant her this blessing. Dear Signora, forgive me if I take too great a liberty in thus addressing you; but I also am growing old and infirm, and Giannetto——”

Elvira paused. “Giannetto! Who is Giannetto?” she said. “It is I,” answered her husband, with ill-concealed impatience. “That was the foolish name I always went by. I dropped it, for I hate the very sound of it.”

“Foolish! oh no. I like the name—your mother's pet name for you.” She returned to her letter—

“And Giannetto was as dear to me as any son could be to his father; so that, in addressing his wife, I feel as if I must know her already. If it be in your power, then, let Giannetto come back to his mother,—not to stay—I know well, and have explained to her, the different sphere of society to which he has attained. We would not, for the world, that he should give up his new pursuits, companions, or friends. Only this I ask—and further, I am bold enough to demand, as a Christian priest—that he should now and then remember that he is the only son of his mother, and she a widow.”

The letter dropped from Elvira's hand, and she turned her brown, wistful eyes on her husband. He did not speak.

“It is a touching letter, Nino. The poor mother must have suffered very much. Is it quite impossible that, when we leave Venice, we

should go to San Jacopo? only for a few days—for one day even?”

Giannetto leapt off the sofa, and paced up and down the room. “Elvira,” he said, his face full of keen distress, “listen to what I say. What you ask is an impossibility. I cannot, and I will not, return there. I cannot tell you why—it concerns myself alone; but, Elvira, trust me, it is a sufficient reason. There are some things in which a wife must trust her husband implicitly without striving to understand them, and this is one of them.”

“And the poor mother?” murmured Elvira.

Giannetto stamped on the ground in real anger. “Elvira, do not go on like this. You do not know what you are talking of. I will take care that that meddling priest does not come between you and me.”

“Stop, stop, Giannetto!” she cried, rising from the ground and clasping her hands; “do not say what you will repent of as soon as said. I will say no more, I promise you; but oh, Nino——”

“You will say no more; you have passed your word?”

“Nino! Nino!”

“It is a promise,” he repeated, distinctly.

Giannetto took up the letter, tore it into a thousand pieces, and tossed them out of the window. Elvira covered her face with her hands, bitter tears forcing themselves through her clasped fingers.

Giannetto stood and looked at her wistfully. After a few moments, she pushed back the masses of dark hair from her brow, and came up to his side, raising her sweet face to be kissed. He clasped her suddenly to him. “Elvira! Elvira! if I only could—if I only dared——” he stopped, the full consequences of what he might say flashing upon

him. "But, Elvira, you will trust me; you, at least, will always trust me?"

"With my whole heart, Nino," she answered. "God will direct you aright. I will have faith in you. You are cold, Nino; you shiver."

"No, no; it is nothing—only that pain again."

Both their hearts were heavy that night. Giannetto came home late from the opera. After all was over, he had rowed far out to sea, striving to regain calmness. He had been singing magnificently. Applause resounded through the theatre, and from every side bouquets fell upon the stage. The heat was

intense, but the house was crowded. But as he came off the stage, he could not help observing that, even while congratulating him, his fellow-actors shrank from him, and whispered behind his back. He felt very sore and aggrieved. And there was this ever-present trouble, too, between himself and his wife. It was all very hard to bear. Weary and heart-sick, he threw himself on his bed, and sank into the heavy sleep of exhausted nature.

Elvira, after he left her for the theatre, stole quietly away to her child. She dismissed the nurse, and sat watching it far into the hot summer night.

CHAPTER VIII.

About four o'clock in the morning the violent ringing of a bell echoed through the Palazzo Lucchetti, and Giannetto was aroused by a light gleaming in his face. Elvira, white and terrified, stood beside him. "Nino, Nino, get up! quick, quick! there is no time to lose! The child is ill. Oh, Nino! I fear she is dying!"

Giannetto sprang out of bed. "What is it, Elvira? What must I do?"

"Oh, fly, fly for a doctor! Call any one—only be quick! be quick! or she will die!"

Elvira hastened away swiftly as she had come. Giannetto dressed himself hurriedly, and followed her to the room where the child lay. Terrible was the shock that awaited him. The little one lay in Elvira's lap, passing from one convulsion into another. None could have recognised in that face, so distorted and changed, the sweet calm of little Felicità.

Elvira looked up, almost wild in her anxiety. "Not gone yet! Nino,

Nino, every moment is an hour!—not yet! Manna, you go! quick! we may yet save her; you know of some doctor? Oh, go! go!"

Manna, who had been kneeling by the child, sprang to her feet and rushed from the room, leaving the father and mother alone.

Elvira did not speak, but now and then a little moan came from her lips.

Giannetto sat down, drawing his chair forward and looking down on the child. "Elvira," he said hoarsely, "will she die? is she going to die?" Her sole answer was to raise her eyes to his with a look of agony. They sat watching—how long, they knew not; it seemed a year, though in reality but a few minutes.

An old doctor was living in an upper apartment in the Palazzo, and to him Manna and the landlady went. He came at once; and in five minutes the little one was placed in a warm bath, and for the time the danger was over. For hours they sat and watched. The

little face regained its soft calm, the tossing limbs grew still, and she sank into a sweet calm sleep. They wrapped her in warm blankets and laid her on her bed. The doctor felt her pulse; it was even now, but for an occasional wild throb. He turned to Elvira and said, "She will do well now, if I mistake not; but give her the medicine I send you as often as you can."

He was going, but Elvira stopped him. "Pardon me," she said, "but tell me the real truth—will she die?"

The old doctor looked at her very compassionately. "Poor Signora," he said, "you must not hope too much. I have never seen a more violent attack; and if it comes again—" he shrugged his shoulders.

Every trace of colour fled out of Elvira's face and lips, and she grasped Giannetto's arm to support herself.

"Why tell her this?" he exclaimed, passionately. "Why should you make it worse by telling her beforehand?"

The doctor looked rather displeased. "Some say 'tell,' some 'conceal.' I, for my part, speak the truth when I am asked; and you, sir, should have the complaisance to hear me finish what I have to say. If, by giving the proper medicines, and having a warm bath always ready, you can keep off the attacks, well; if not—"

He took off his spectacles, beginning to wipe them with his large blue handkerchief. Giannetto sat down again moodily. With a deep bow, which all were too much pre-occupied to acknowledge, the doctor quitted the room.

They heard him speaking outside to a little group of servants and lodgers, drawn together by sympathy and curiosity, headed by the Padrona or landlady. "It is a bad case,

Signora Padrona—a bad case; and I fear me they will lose their child. The first child, you say? It is a pity; but it is the will of Heaven. If the convulsions come on again, for the love of heaven, Signora Padrona, have a priest in the way with the holy unction; for they are frightfully violent, and the child is very weak. Was there no one to tell them to put it in hot water at once? What fools people are! and the women in especial! But it is too true. The mother is very young, and it is a first child. A thousand thanks, Signora; no wine, but I would take a cup of coffee with cognac. A thousand thanks. With permission, I will wait here, and will snatch a moment's sleep—I cannot find it in my heart to go up-stairs. Ah! there is the coffee—none in Venice like yours, Signora Padrona. It is now striking the six hours. Well, well, I will take a little more repose." And the rough but kindly old doctor stretched himself on a couple of hard old-fashioned chairs.

The day came on, and grew into a fierce glare of heat, and still the little one slept. The blinds were drawn down, and kept constantly wetted by Manna with cold water; and a huge block of ice sent in by the landlady helped to keep the room comparatively cool.

All day Elvira sat at the foot of the bed, little simple books of devotion by her side, which now and then she took up. She could only read a few lines at a time, but they suggested thoughts on which she strove to fix her mind. When Manna brought her food, she ate it mechanically, for she knew that she must not waste her strength. Giannetto was so restless that she persuaded him to go out when mid-day had passed.

The doctor came in constantly. Elvira believed that all was going

on well ; but he did not like the heavy sleep of the child, and often desired it to be roused, to swallow medicine.

Evening came again ; the sun went down in a bath of liquid fire, and fierce rays of dark crimson streaked the sky, still purple with glowing heat.

Giannetto came softly in. "How is she? how is she doing now?" he whispered. "Just the same. Thank God for this long sweet sleep!"

Elvira moved slowly to the little bed. As she gazed, a look of horror came over her face—the convulsions had returned. "Nino! Manna! it has come again!—quick! fly!" Giannetto flew up-stairs for the doctor; Manna brought forward the bath. The doctor, as he came hastily down, called out, "Signora Padrona—Signora, quick! send for him at once," and he followed Giannetto into the room.

The landlady knew only too well whom and what he meant. Down she went, on to the steps at the door, and hastily called to a gondolier.

She was just about to step off the stairs, when another gondola came gliding swiftly round the corner, under the canopy of which, with his hands folded in his habit, sat the stern, upright figure of a Franciscan monk.

"Padre! padre!" she shouted, at the utmost pitch of her shrill Italian voice. "Padre! for the love of God!"

The friar started from his apparent reverie. "Stop," he said to the gondolier. "I am wanted."

The landlady bent forward,—"Father," she repeated, "if you are a priest, come in—come in at once. A child is dying—the only child of Giovanni, the great singer."

The friar stepped out of his gondola, and followed the kind-hearted woman, as, breathless and

almost sobbing, she hastened up the stairs. "It is the hand of God," he muttered to himself.

On they went, through the long suite of cool rooms, across the gallery at the end, into the sick-chamber.

One single glance was enough—they were too late.

The room was full of people. Elvira sat upon the floor with the child on her lap. Manna had lifted it out of the bath, and placed it there; and, all unheeded, the water was dripping from its soft brown hair. As if turned to stone, the mother's eyes were fixed upon the tiny corpse. Manna's sobs rang through the room; the others, mere spectators of the scene, lodgers and servants in the house, stood close round, and now and then one of them spoke a gentle word of sympathy. Giannetto remained motionless, with his arms folded, as he had stood to watch his child die.

This was the scene that met their eyes as the door opened.

All made way involuntarily as Fra Geronimo (for he it was) entered. All knelt when he approached—all but one, the unhappy father, who, as the first sacred words broke the silence, stole away, crouching, creeping, cringing, as the voice of prayer upraised itself to heaven. Outside the door he stood, alone, an outcast from God and man. They removed Elvira from the room. Gently, tenderly they carried her away, and laid her on the green couch in the large empty room. She was not insensible, but she lay stunned and tearless, without moving, where they placed her. They threw the window wide open and let in the evening air; one little ray still lingered from the dying sunset, and checkered the polished floor. They sought for Giannetto, and sent him to her there. The friar was gone. He knew that this was not his time—

that for his work patience was needful.

Giannetto stole in, and sat clasping his wife's hand, which lay in his quite cold and motionless.

Peck, peck, peck! what was that? and then that soft-sounding cooing? Motionless they watched. One by one, pluming their soft wings, billing and cooing to each other, the pigeons of St Mark came gently in. They looked for the tiny hand that had fed them, for the little one that had loved them so well.

Peck, peck—there was no bread to-day. Was it only imaginary that the cooing voices took a wondering sound? They came closer, turning their pearly heads from side to side, passing in and out of the dying ray of light.

Elvira suddenly started forward and burst into a wild fit of hysterical weeping. With a loud whirl of terror, the pigeons flew away.

The storm of grief let loose seemed to shake her from head to foot; her self-command had given way, and she knew not what she said. Clinging, holding on to Giannetto, she poured out the agony of her grief; now imploring him to tell her what the secret was that kept them apart, now telling him that she could and would trust him, but he must not look at her like that, not be angry with her; for her child was dead,

and there was nothing left to her but him. Then she would call upon the child, calling her her comfort, her only hope for Nino's conversion. Fits of exhaustion followed, but the slightest word brought back the flood of agony.

So through the long, long night, till another morning dawned. Then Giannetto took his pale wife by the hand, and led her from the chamber. She let him do what he wished with her, following him whither he would.

Down the silent canals they passed, crossed the piazza of St Mark, to the door of the great cathedral. "Go in," he murmured hoarsely; and she obeyed.

Compared to the outer air it was dark, but she saw at once what her eyes mechanically sought. Before the high altar stood a little bier, covered by a pall as white as driven snow; wreaths of lovely flowers lay round and upon it, not all white, but red, and purple, and gold, glowing with colours, typical of that glory to which the child had attained. Elvira sank upon her knees, and her heart rose up in fervent prayer.

In a far corner of the cathedral, where it was all dark and in shadow, knelt the Franciscan, pale from fasting, exhausted by the vigils of a long night, in which, in pain and penance, he had been wrestling for a fallen soul.

CHAPTER IX.

"I am sure we shall be too early, John," said Amy to her husband. "Nonsense, Amy; we are not in London. Remember how early Roman hours are."

They were driving up to the door of a house in Rome one evening on which some English friends had a large party. It was a soft oppressive

evening; the sirocco had been blowing all day, making the air heavy and languid. They drove rattling under the covered doorway, the heavy Roman carriage-horses stopping with a suddenness which threw Amy forward.

"How I hate that way of stopping!" she exclaimed, as she shook

out her ruffled plumes, and followed the porter up-stairs.

The room in which the lady of the house received her guests was pretty and peculiar. It had often been used for private theatricals, and possessed a recess between the two tall French windows, filled by a raised orchestra or stage, now brilliant with flowers, and enlivened by a large cage full of little merry birds. The hostess, seeing that Amy was watching them, told her that they were a constant source of anxiety to her children; for, from time to time, three or four of the poor little prisoners disappeared, and such a disappearance was too often followed by a dish of so-called larks at dinner, causing most uncomfortable misgivings.

The room was full of guests, most of them English; but there was a sprinkling of German *attachés*, who looked bored, and twirled their yellow moustaches; and a few Italians, chiefly men. The English were of every description,—young eldest sons “doing” Rome; mammas giving fair, very young daughters, a first taste of society before bringing them out in London; most of the regular English residents in Rome; and here and there an Italian artist, very much out of his element.

There was a little music. The young lady of the house sang tolerably, and her music-master, a small dapper Italian, accompanied her in high glee; for she sang songs composed by himself, of the very weakest description. Ices were handed round at intervals, and tea, from which the Italians shrank back involuntarily.

The mixture of social elements was too incongruous, conversation flagged, and Amy felt wearied. She pushed open the half-closed window, and went out to enjoy the cool of the little garden.

It was very pretty in its own

way; and it amused her to watch a tame jackdaw hopping about on the wall, with its head very much on one side. There was a good deal to explore and discover, notwithstanding the diminutiveness of the place. On the right was a little grotto, curtained with maidenhair fern, in which a nymph in white marble, nearly the size of life, reposed, in utter disproportion to the dimensions of her shrine. There was a little grove also; as you wandered through its mazes you came upon busts, and statues, and fountains full of goldfish; many of the busts had lost their noses, but they were nevertheless suggestive, all of them being antique. Over one fountain the ivy and leaves grew very thickly, and half hidden among them lay a little marble Cupid asleep. Amy, wandering about, was bending down to look at him more nearly, when a sound from the drawing-room made her suddenly turn back and approach the window.

It was a sound of singing, so lovely that she would not interrupt or break the spell, but leant against the wall outside, in the midst of a great bush of scarlet salvias, which contrasted prettily with the soft white gown she wore.

She could just see enough to perceive that the little singing-master was accompanying; his mobile Italian face was screwed into an expression of ecstasy, as the glorious full notes of a wonderful tenor voice swelled through the room—now it rose to inconceivable power, now softened till the strain was almost heavenly in its sweetness. Amy was entranced; she stood motionless till the last sound died away. The silence was broken by a sudden burst of applause, and the gentlemen gathered round the singer.

Amy took advantage of the movement, and came in unobserved amid the general confusion. “Who is

he? What is his name?" she asked her nearest neighbour.

"It is Giovanni, the great tenor; he has just come to Rome. Did you ever hear such a voice? is it not lovely, glorious?" And the old English lady whom she had addressed very quietly managed to wipe away a tear. There was a general hush; people fell back, many seated themselves, and Giovanni sang again.

Amy felt the sort of superstitious dread creep over her that her partial knowledge of his history gave. She could not take her eyes off his face, it seemed so altered, and yet so like what it had been when she first saw him.

The second song over, Giovanni moved away from the piano, while renewed murmurs of admiration filled the room.

The crowd made way, and the lady of the house bustled up to Amy. "Allow me to introduce Signora Giovanni," she said, in French, adding, in a low voice, as she hurried away,—“his wife, you know—she is anxious to be presented to you.”

Amy made room on the sofa beside her for the pale but still lovely Elvira, who, in her heavy black velvet gown, looked even more white and frail than usual.

"I must ask a thousand pardons, Signora," she began at once; "but your likeness to your sister struck me so forcibly, that I asked who you were, and could not resist taking the liberty of begging to be presented to you."

"I am very glad of it," said Amy; "I have heard so much of you that I have been long anxious to make your acquaintance, and to meet your husband again. I must indeed congratulate you. What a talent! What a singularly beautiful voice!"

"The Signora is too good. Yes,

she is right; it is a wonderful talent. I trust that the Signor Conte your father is in good health; and your sister, she is well?"

"They are both well; and it will give them great pleasure to hear that I have seen you. They have often spoken to me of you, and of Signor Giovanni,—and the baby, little Felicità, is she well?"

Elvira showed no more signs of emotion than the quivering of her voice, as she answered—"Thank you, dear Signora; but when you write to them, will you tell them that she is dead?"

Amy looked and felt shocked at this answer to her question; but Elvira smiled very sweetly, and went on,—“Are your little children well? The Signora Elena used to tell me about them when we were at Florence. Are they with you? But no! Surely you have not brought them so long a journey?"

"No, indeed!" answered Amy; "they are too young. I thought it best to leave them at home. Helen has charge of them."

"Ah, what a happiness for her!"

"By the by, Signora Giovanni," said Amy, suddenly, "do you ever see anything of a certain Fra Geronimo, a Franciscan, in whom my father was much interested? I think (but I am not sure) that you knew him, that he was your friend?"

"No, no," said Elvira—"not then; but it is curious that you should ask. We did not know him then. Without doubt, we mean the same person—the great preacher. We know him now; but it was accidentally, and under sad circumstances, that we first met him, about six months ago, at Venice. He is in Rome now, I understand; and this very Sunday that comes, he is to preach at Santa Maria del Popolo. If the Signora has not heard him, she should go; for it is a won-

derful power, and given to few. Do you remain long in Rome? Are you interested? amused?"

"Very much; it is a marvellous place. And you, have you been here long?"

"We have but now come. My husband has accepted a very short engagement till the beginning of Lent. We have been lately at Turin and at Milan. He does not like the music here, neither the pieces given, nor the musicians—they are all bad; there is no school, no method, he says, except in the Papal choir, and that stands by itself, apart. They are ill-taught at the opera; but the voices are good—fine in tone and quality."

Giannetto approached his wife. "Elvira," he said, "I fear that we must take leave; for I have promised to sing elsewhere to-night." Elvira rose, and, with her pretty Italian curtsy, wished Amy good-night.

Scarcely were they gone when a perfect buzz of conversation arose, to which Amy listened, anxious to hear all she could about them. One of the gentlemen—an old *habitué* of Roman society—professed to know more than any one. He was talking rather mysteriously as Amy drew her chair into the little circle which had formed itself round him.

"Yes," he was saying, "there is something decidedly odd about the man and his pretty wife. A friend of mine told me that at Venice very strange things were said about him, and the extraordinary power and unchanging quality of his voice. For instance, once he came to the opera, half fainting with fatigue—as white as a sheet, and trembling as if with palsy; but when he opened his mouth, his voice was as grand and clear as if he was in the fullest strength. My friend heard afterwards that he had lost his only child that very morning."

"But," said one of the bystanders, "a very powerful will will often carry one through on such occasions."

"True; but how would you account for this—that through heat and cold, draughts, crowds, all those accidents that most affect a singer's voice, his has never been known to vary? He is always singing, never gives himself any rest. No, no, my friends; it is very unaccountable, and not so easy to explain as you seem to think it."

Here the little singing-master broke in—"Ah, Signori! is he not a wonder, a marvel? After one has heard him, one can listen to no more. Truly, it seems to me that his singing is a *finale* to the music of the evening."

"Do you know him? Are you acquainted with his history?"

"I know him, certainly; but I know nothing of his history. I have been at his house occasionally. He is good and charitable, and gives largely. I know of some very poor families in Venice to whom he has been very kind; and even to others who are apparently in better circumstances, but who, God knows, often need as much, he has been a true friend." His little twinkling eyes glistened as he spoke.

"And his wife, who is she?"

"I can tell you that," said Amy, gently. "She is the daughter of a very respectable Government official at Florence; and my father both knew and respected the family much. There is nothing at all mysterious about her," she added, smiling.

When the party had broken up, and Amy was alone with her husband in the carriage, she told him how anxious she was not to lose sight of Giovanni and Elvira, for she felt the deepest interest in both, but especially in the sad-looking young wife. But days passed in the

usual whirl of life in Rome, and they never chanced to meet.

The time passed in sight-seeing all day, going into society at night, and occasionally a visit to the opera. Giannetto was so great a man now that he could afford to be capricious; he sang rather irregularly—sometimes disappointing his audiences by refusing to do so.

The Carnival approached, and gaieties increased; balls and parties every night, the usual fun in the Corso, the throwing of *confetti*, of bouquets, bonbons, &c., from balconies and windows—all the customary noise and bustle, which Amy and her husband were still young enough to enter into and enjoy most thoroughly.

Then came the sudden change—the falling, as it were, of the black veil of Lent over the merry streets. No one who has not seen it can imagine the transformation of Rome, not only outer but inner Rome, at that season; for the streets, no longer crowded with singing, dancing revellers, are quiet and empty, —the same crowds that lately swarmed in them kneel in the churches, calm, collected, and devout; some hundreds of them have passed from the wildest excitement to the deepest prostration of spirit; all are alike sobered and absorbed by the religious duties of the season.

The weather changed, and became cold and bleak; a bitter *tramontana* swept the streets; and most of the English left Rome for Naples, there to spend the weeks between the beginning of Lent and the Easter festivities.

Giannetto and Elvira remained in Rome. He spent most of his days wandering in the Campagna, often not coming home till late, for his restlessness kept him always moving. Her life sank into a gentle, regular monotony. Like most Italian women, Elvira had no resources in

herself—she neither drew nor worked, she scarcely ever read; but, during this season, she passed almost all her time in church. There she seemed really happy; and her neighbours called her *dévôte*, a saint. Her confessor, Fra Geronimo, encouraged her. "Courage, daughter," he would say; "pray—fast and pray. Wrestle as I wrestle, and the soul of your husband will be given to us."

Under a stern sense of duty, Fra Geronimo had never revealed to Elvira what he knew of her husband's history, so of that she was ignorant still.

Giannetto seemed instinctively to know where and how she passed her time, for he never asked. More and more taciturn and sad he grew, till all the sweet smiles with which she greeted him failed to elicit one in return. She thought that the enforced idleness of Lent told on his spirits, and she made many efforts to rouse and cheer him, but too often in vain.

One day he came in looking brighter and more lively than he had done for a long time. He was flourishing a letter in his hand. "Elvira, what say you to this?" he cried; "the offer of an engagement in London—from Covent Garden! The offer is a magnificent one. Tell me, dear one, should you not like the change?—the novelty of it all? You would see your English friends. What do you say?"

"England! London!—ah! shall we really go there?"

"Yes, really; I wait but your consent to accept. They are appreciative, these English—it will be a pleasure to sing to them. It will do you good, Elvira—the cool summer will bring the colour into my dear one's pale face."

The little pale face was now flushed with pleasure at the unwonted brightness of his tone, and

she looked up eagerly. "Ah, Nino mine, it will do us both good! When do we go?"

"Immediately after Easter, when London is most full. More fame to be won yet, Elvira. I climb! I climb! and before long it shall be said that I am the greatest singer the world has ever seen!" His face flushed, his eyes sparkled, and he drank in the proud conviction that the crown of his ambition was coming, an unrivalled and world-wide fame.

"Ah! truly there is none to compare with my Nino," said his young wife, twining her arms around him; "and there is nothing like the gift of song."

That evening a small close carriage stopped before the 'Fontana di Trevi.' There is a well-known and cherished superstition, that if you drink of this water the night before leaving Rome it insures your return.

Out of the carriage stepped Amy and her husband, and descended the steps to the fountain-edge. The water sparkled and danced in the moonlight; and the shadows of the rock, Tritons, and great sea-horses were so disturbed that it seemed almost as if they were in truth plunging and tumbling in the clear streams which dashed over them.

Giannetto and Elvira passed

slowly by on foot, enjoying a moonlight walk.

"See, Elvira, there are travellers going down to drink at the fountain to insure a return to Rome!"

Elvira let go his arm. "Look, look, Nino!" she said; "it is the English Signora Aimée and her husband." And she went down the steps.

"Once, twice, three times for good luck!" exclaimed Amy, drinking the clear, sweet water.

"It is all nonsense," grumbled her husband—but he drank nevertheless.

"Signora, Signora Aimée," said Elvira's soft voice; "so you leave Rome?"

Amy turned round eagerly. "I am so glad to have seen you once more. Yes, we go to-morrow."

"I am glad to be able to wish you a good journey." She held out her hand. Amy took it, and with a sudden impulse bent down and kissed her.

She went away to her carriage, and Elvira stood watching till they were out of sight.

Giannetto drew her hand under his arm. "How cold you are, child! come home at once." He stooped and drank a handful of the water. "It is refreshing," he said; "but do not let us delay—these Roman nights are treacherous."

CHAPTER X.

Elvira caught a very severe cold that night—so severe that for days she was unable to leave her bed. Like all ailments in Rome, it partook of the nature of low fever, and weakened her greatly. Easter came and went; but when the day drew near on which Giannetto's London engagement was to begin, she was still too weak for so long a journey. Giannetto, therefore, carefully wrap-

ping her up, and making her as comfortable as possible, took her to Florence, and left her under the loving care of Signora Mattei, while he continued his journey by himself.

Elvira was received by her mother with rapturous joy; the brothers and sisters danced round her; her old father would scarcely let her out of his sight. All this cheered

and comforted her wonderfully. There was also the excitement of a wedding in prospect. Adelaide, her second sister, a pretty, dark-eyed girl of seventeen, was to be married to her *fiancé*, Gaetano Vacchini.

Elvira did not recover her strength as they had hoped she would. She was unable to enter into all the bustle of the family arrangements; but it was her great pleasure to furnish Adelaide with money, and send her out shopping with her mother, or with Violante the servant, and then to witness the ecstasies of the delighted girl when she brought home and exhibited her finery.

"See, see, Elvira! this lace, how beautiful! and a silk gown of the new colour! Carola Brei wore one like it at their house; and she said to me, 'Adelaide, now is your time; do not be married without one. Extravagant! Ah, bah! if one is not extravagant when one is married, when is one to be so? And one must be well dressed at first.' Then see! this shawl. I wept, I entreated the mamma; but she would not give it to me. She said that she had not a *baiocco*—that it was flimsy trash; and now, thanks to you——" and Adelaide threw her arms round her sister's neck, half smothering her with kisses.

The wedding-day came, and it was Elvira's task to dress her sister in the pretty white bridal dress her own taste had chosen. She could not keep her tears from falling fast as she watched the little procession start from the door. She was not strong enough for the whole ceremony, so she reserved herself for the last part, waiting till the little procession appeared in sight on their return from the Mairie in the Borgo Ognissanti, and then joining them on their way to church. The religious ceremony was performed at their parish church, San Marco.

They returned home; and then

followed all the packing up of large boxes of bonbons, to be sent to the friends and relations of the bride and bridegroom, so that there was no time for sitting down to think; and the first leisure moment had to be spent in writing a long account of all that had passed to Giannetto in London.

Elvira was now always on the sofa. Every day her loving friends tried to believe that she was better; every night found her more weak and restless; and those of their acquaintance less interested and more experienced, perceived too clearly that the bright flush on her cheek was not the hue of returning health.

The day after the wedding brought a large packet of extracts from the English newspapers. Giannetto had found among the chorus-singers a young Italian who understood English pretty well. He was very poor, and thankful to be employed in making rough translations from all the papers of the reports of the great tenor's successes at Covent Garden, for Elvira's benefit. Her pride in her husband's achievements was much increased by the praises thus bestowed on him.

She lay on the sofa, reading them aloud, Signora Celeste, with hands and eyes uplifted, beside her; the old Cavaliere, violin in hand, resting it on the ground, and softly beating time with the bow; the children in front; Violante, her sleeves tucked up above her elbows, behind,—all listening as she read how Giannetto had been recalled four times after the fall of the curtain—how each time bouquets had been thrown from every part of the house—and how, on one occasion, he had been three times encored. "No voice," one of the papers said, "had ever been heard in England at all approaching the voice of the new tenor in power or beauty. It

was only a pity that he was not a better actor ; there was a want of grace in the lighter scenes, his efforts at gaiety and playfulness appearing forced and unnatural." Elvira coloured, and all her listeners defiantly declared that newspaper criticisms were never to be relied on, with the true inconsistency of admiring affection. The papers went on to notice the wonderful strength of Signor Giovanni's voice—how, after singing all night and numerous encores, it was as fresh as ever ; and finally, they prophesied that, if the slight defects in his acting could be got over, he would be in truth the very first of his profession.

Elvira put down the papers with a proud heart. She kept them always beside her ; for whenever friends and visitors came in (which happened very frequently), Signora Celeste would come bustling up, insisting on reading the whole set of them again ; for she dearly loved the congratulations of her neighbours on her now famous son-in-law's success, and was never tired of hearing them reiterated.

Giannetto was happy in London. His success was complete. He found himself plunged into all the gaieties of a large musical and artistic society, of which he speedily became an *habitué*. He enjoyed the perfection which music, both instrumental and vocal, has attained in England ; and, more than all, he enjoyed finding worthy support in his fellow-singers. The "cast" at Covent Garden was a fine one, the orchestra in first-rate condition. No *primo tenore* could have wished for a better introduction to a new audience. He was rich. He was famous.

Giannetto would scarcely acknowledge to himself that it was almost a relief to be away from his wife. Not that he did not love her. His attachment to her was passionate

as his Italian nature, but it was the very force of that attachment which gave him the feeling of relief. He had no longer to combat the almost ungovernable longing to tell her his whole life's history, to break down the barrier which his want of confidence had raised between them. While thus absent, he was no longer tormented by her wistful looks. When his abnegation of religion, his absolute alienation from God, betrayed itself, those amongst whom he now lived seemed to be indifferent to such matters, and for the time he felt himself free.

Giannetto studied music indefatigably. He also devoted much time to the improvement of his general education. He engaged a tutor, and worked hard, endeavouring to raise himself to the level of his better-educated companions. Still, occasionally, the old fits of restlessness would return irresistibly for days at a time, during which he could settle to no definite occupation.

He was not altogether popular. He was too capricious, and often too moody to please. He made a point of never permitting companionship to advance beyond a certain limit ; so that many who, attracted by his singular power of fascination, imagined themselves on the road to intimacy and confidence, suddenly found their advances coldly received, and themselves treated with something not unlike repulsion. At the same time, he had few enemies. He was never boastful or bragging. The proud feelings of gratified ambition that swelled his heart were for himself alone. Outwardly he appeared too haughty to be vain ; and he treated his unprecedented success as so much a matter of course, that the lookers-on often wondered whether this arose from the most sublime affectation or simple indifference.

The days passed on ; and as the

time of Giannetto's return drew near, Elvira became restless and anxious. Her strength began to fail rapidly under a burning inward fever which consumed her; and by degrees a strong conviction dawned upon her that she had not long to live.

One day the Cavaliere, entering the music-room, where Elvira usually passed her mornings on the sofa, found her weeping over a letter just received. The kind old man hastily drew a chair near to her, and sat looking at her wistfully through his large spectacles.

"No bad news, my precious child?"

Elvira shook her head. "It is nothing, nothing; only that I am very weak, very foolish. Nino cannot be here for a fortnight more; he has accepted an engagement which will keep him longer in England. Ah, father, dear father! I feel as if there were no time to lose. I must see him before I die!"

"Die! Elvira, child, do not speak of dying."

"I must speak of it, for the time is short; and I must—*Dio mio!*—I must see him before I die. Oh, father mine, I am frightened when I think that I may not see him again. I have so much to say to him."

The old Cavaliere slowly brushed away two large tears before he answered—"Alas, my child! I fear sometimes that your life has not been a happy one."

"Happy? Ah yes! happier far than I deserve—but for one grief, one sorrow."

"Felicità?"

"No, no; that grief has at times been almost a joy. I mean that Nino—Alas! what can I say? he loves not God nor holy things."

"Poor little one!"

"Ah, father mine, I have never spoken of this except to him and in my prayers; but now—the relief,

the comfort of telling all to you! You say nothing; you only grieve with me. It is that I want. Father, what is this mystery? What does it all mean? Oh, if this barrier could but be broken down that stands between us! Why will he not go to his old home? Alas! what does it all mean?"

"My child," began the Cavaliere, "sometimes the indifference of youth——"

"It is not indifference—indeed, not indifference. When I have spoken to him, I have seen the look of grief, the shadow of some great unspoken sorrow, in his face. He seems to shrink—to be afraid—Sometimes—I dread that—that some great crime. . . . My God! what have I said?"

She buried her face in her hands, shuddering violently.

The Cavaliere laid his hand on her head. "Do not fear, my child. No one is here but your old father, who will help you if he can."

Elvira raised herself again. "Father," she said, "I cannot understand it. When I speak of his mother, he assumes a harshness foreign to his nature. Then, and then only, he has been unkind to me. Alas! he made me promise never to ask him to go home again; but while he spoke so harshly, his lips were quivering, his eyes looked at me in such agony. Ah! what can it mean?—what can it mean?"

"My precious child!"

"Long ago, my mother had an idea that all was not right. I know not why, but she thought it was something to do with his voice—possibly that he might have become a singer in defiance of the wishes of his mother and his friends—who knows? I cannot tell why she thought so. She tried to learn what she could from the English Conte. He had nothing to tell her.

What could he have had to say? And, alas! the fact remains the same. And he may die impenitent, unabsolved. *Dio mio!* my heart will break!"

"Elvira, darling!"

"Oh, father, night and day I pray that I may be spared to see him once—only once again! Through the long hours of the night, when I lie awake, I am planning what to say to him, what arguments to use, what points to urge; and I am so ignorant, it all ends in this, 'Nino, Nino! if you love me—for my sake!'"

The old Cavaliere only kissed her forehead; his voice was choked—he could not speak. Elvira looked up at him with her large sad eyes. She went on—"Fra Geronimo tells me that if I am patient, and go on hoping and praying, he will at last be won; but time goes on, and he cannot come home for a fortnight longer, and who knows whether I shall live so long? Father, give me this promise—if I should get worse, send an express for him at once. Let me feel that I can rely on this. Even should it be a false alarm, he will forgive it; and I must see him before I die."

"I promise, Elvira, my darling; let me write at once. Surely it is better that he should be with you now?"

"No; do not call him home if you can help it. Sometimes I feel as if the very longing to see him again will serve to keep me alive until he comes. Father, dear father, if I fail in persuading him, do not give him up; but, for my sake,

look on him as you would on a son of your own." She went on, almost to herself, "Nino loves his mother, I am sure of it; and he loves that good priest who wrote to me. What can it mean? Why does he feign anger when I speak of them? Why does he make believe that he does not love them? It cannot be as my mother thought—they would have been so proud of his singing; and yet how unwilling he is to speak of his voice. His life before we first met is a perfect blank to me."

The Cavaliere resumed gently, "My child, are you sure that you are not imagining all kinds of foolish things? Giovanni is young, and strong, and thoughtless. When sorrow comes, or illness, or any sad experience, he will turn where only comfort can be found."

"Father, have you then not noticed the dread he has of sacred things? It is not indifference. I have seen him stand looking through the door into a church, with a look of longing that went to my heart. Then if I begged him to come in, he would be angry, and irritable; but I could see his great distress. Once he said to me, 'You do not know the sacrifice you wish me to make;' and I did not know—alas! I sometimes fear that I shall never know what he meant."

Though exhausted at the time, Elvira felt much comfort from this conversation with her father. It was a relief to have spoken of her sorrows; and his silent sympathy was more to her than any words could have been.

CHAPTER XL

The season came to an end in London, Parliament adjourned, and the fashionable world dispersed in all directions. Giovanni's last appearance at Covent Garden was

over; and, rich in fame and purse, he prepared to return home.

But yet one more triumph awaited him. He received an offer from Paris, too liberal for

him to refuse. He consented to sing for two nights only, on condition of the terms being doubled. The arrogant demand was immediately acceded to, and Giovanni went over to Paris.

His success was complete. He was borne from the concert-hall on the shoulders of the crowd. Wherever he went they flocked to see him. He received presents of every description, bouquets and jewels; the Conservatoire crowned him, and bestowed honorary titles on him.

"I have nothing left to wish for," he wrote to Elvira. "I am on the topmost step of the ladder. Rejoice with me; I have nothing more to win."

He returned to his hotel the last night before leaving Paris, to find a foreign despatch on the table. The message was very brief: "Elvira is frightfully ill: come quickly, if you would see her alive."

Who can describe the misery of that journey? Night and day he travelled, and it seemed to him that the swift express trains crawled at a foot-pace. The time lost in crossing Mont Cenis seemed interminable—double and treble relays of horses and mules were sent on, but the time seemed endless.

He reached Florence at last. There, waiting for him at the station, stood the old Cavaliere. "She is better!" he shouted, before the train had time to stop. "She is already better, thanks be to God!"

Before many moments had passed, Giannetto stood by the bedside of his wife.

Though the summer was at its height, the warm weather had not restored Elvira's strength. Her family, always beside her, did not perceive how thin she grew; and they became so much accustomed to the little short cough, which had never left her since her illness at Rome, that at last they scarcely noticed it at all.

The lovely colour that now so frequently succeeded her paleness, foreshadowed, alas! too truly, the dreaded *malattia Inglese*—the consumption that is so little known, but so greatly feared, in Italy. She had not appeared more failing or ill than usual, when one day she was seized with a very violent fit of coughing, attended with much pain. Fearful that she had caught fresh cold, they sent for the doctor, who pronounced her to be suffering from acute inflammation of the lungs. "She cannot live," said the doctor; "the disease gains ground. It may be days or weeks, possibly months; but I can do nothing."

Two days afterwards she broke a blood-vessel; and the danger seemed so imminent that they at once telegraphed for Giannetto. Before his arrival, however, the first anxiety had passed away; and, although much weakened, she was pronounced out of immediate danger.

Giannetto proved a most tender and efficient nurse; but he absolutely refused to believe in her danger, and was almost rude to the doctor when he spoke despondingly of his patient's state. He was always insisting that she was better, getting well.

Everything that money could procure of the rarest and most costly nature he obtained for Elvira; soft eider-down from Germany, rich Indian shawls, luxurious English sofas and invalid chairs. He liked her to wear costly lace, and put beautiful rings that he had purchased for her in London and Paris on her little thin fingers.

"My Elvira is a great and rich lady," he said to her; "and when she is well again, we will buy a beautiful villa at Florence, and become grand Signori."

She would sometimes hold out her fingers and watch the rings drop off one by one. "Look, Nino mine," she said; "like these, the

pleasures and riches of this world are dropping from me!" He could not be angry with her now when she said these things.

Fra Geronimo was living at his Franciscan home at Fiesole when the news reached him of Giannetto's return to Florence. He waited some days, and then determined that he would seek him out. Two or three times he called at the Casa Mattei, and each time Giannetto was denied to him. Once Elvira sent for him, and begged him to see her husband; and, if necessary, to force him into an interview.

"Father," she said, "I feel that every day that passes now is an opportunity lost. See him, and tell him that I am dying, that before many weeks he will be alone; and tell him that I cannot die till his soul is safe, till he returns to the God whom he has forsaken. Father," she added suddenly, the hectic hue flushing into her face, "it is not that he does not believe; he believes—he suffers—I know it."

"He believes and suffers," repeated the friar. "My daughter, I have prayed long for him. I have striven against the power of the enemy; and by God's grace I shall prevail, and his soul shall be saved!"

That night, when all were at rest, Fra Geronimo slowly and patiently paced the Borgo Pinti. He knew that this was the hour in which Giannetto allowed himself exercise and relaxation from the constant attendance on his wife; and he awaited his return homeward.

The night was calm and still, the silence only now and then broken by the irregular clang of different church-bells, telling the quarters of each passing hour. The shadow of the tall friar looked almost gigantic as it fell before him; and Giannetto started back when he saw it, as he came up the street, and the song he had been softly singing died away unfinished on his lips.

"Giannetto," said the friar—and Giannetto started again at the sound of his old, once familiar name—"I have sought you day after day, and the doors are closed against me. I must speak with you, Giannetto."

"Would that you would leave me to myself," said Giannetto, angrily; "I need no meddling monk to pry into my affairs."

The friar laid his hand powerfully upon his arm. "I know your secret," he said. "You have nothing to tell me that I do not know."

Giannetto shuddered. "Then I need tell you nothing, Father. Leave me in peace."

They had reached the door of the house. Almost as if the hand of the friar acted on him as a spell, Giannetto opened it; and they passed side by side into a large room on the ground-floor. It was not dark, for the moon streamed in, and her ghostly, colourless light filled the room.

Giannetto flung himself down on a chair, his face turned sullenly away. Fra Geronimo slowly paced the room, his eyes bent on the ground.

"Giannetto," he said—and the low hollow tone spoke of mental and physical suffering—"I must have you listen, and forgive me if I speak too much of myself. I was once young, and strong, and brilliant, as you are now. My life began in courts. I was rich, I was prosperous, and beloved. Giannetto, I also was a scoffer. To me, God was a mockery; religion the foolery of priests and women. My life was all enjoyment. I cared for nothing, thought of nothing, but the pleasures of the hour. I watched my mother's heart break slowly; for, Giannetto, she loved me—I was her idol, and I spurned her God. She had another son." The friar's voice grew lower and more husky as he spoke on.

"This son was young, and fresh, and innocent. On her deathbed she charged me to guard and watch

over him for her sake. O God ! O God ! I swore to do so. I broke the oath. I was wild, dissolute, and recked not what I did. Into the dark regions of sin and hell I led him. I surrounded him with temptation. I laughed to see him yield ; and thus I led him on, from bad to worse, till the measure of his iniquity was full, and there was no time for atonement. Giannetto, he died cursing God and man ; and I knew that I—I—his brother, his sworn guardian—had driven him to damnation !”

He paused in his walk to and fro, and clasping his hands, he stood before Giannetto, who had bowed his head on the table.

“I tell you, that since that hour I have known no peace. I tore myself from home,—it was a time of madness and despair. I sought oblivion in vain ; the wild eyes of my dying brother haunted me night and day, and the awful blasphemy of his words, as the foam of death was gathering on his lips—good God ! they haunt me now. Then came a time of illness, and all said that I must die ; but life was strong within me, and there was work for me to do. I lived—a blighted, suffering man—for God had work for me to do.

“There was a priest, an old man, who came to tend me. God has rewarded him for what he did for me. He gave me hope ; he bade me spend my life in bringing souls to God. ‘Atone,’ he said ; ‘bring back the fallen ones to Christ ; and so, by saving many souls, atone for destroying one.’

“I went forth to the combat, armed by St Francis with Humility, Fasting, and Poverty : and the years go on, but the atonement is yet unaccomplished. I pray, I fast ; but there is one soul I cannot win, there is one sinner I cannot save. Giannetto, have pity on me—have pity on yourself !”

He stood before him, tall and powerful ; and the pale moon lit up his figure, leaving Giannetto shrunken, shivering in the shade. The monk’s voice changed to a softer, gentler strain—

“Nino, my son, there is not much time remaining. The light of another world begins to beam on the brow of your angel-wife—she is dying ! You strive not to believe it ; but, Nino, it is true. Not many weeks are left you of her love—the time flies fast,—repent while yet she lives, and let her die in peace ! Tell her all. You have much to renounce—fame, riches, happiness—but you have all to gain. I charge you, if you love her, to repent !” Another pause. The friar sank on his knees.

“Once more, Giannetto, I beseech you to repent ! Suffering ! what is present suffering compared to the peace which passes all understanding ? What is daily, hourly suffering, compared to the agony of unrepentant remorse—remorse that will stand beside you night and day, will infuse a bitter gall into every pleasure, will sharpen every pain, and will linger on in the very memory of your young dead wife ? Have pity on Elvira—have pity on yourself !”

Still Giannetto lay with his arms stretched out before him, and his head hidden. He writhed as the friar spoke, but he answered nothing.

Once more the friar rose to his full height, gazing down on the prostrate figure—“Giannetto, one more appeal ! Who are you, what are you, that you should brave the wrath of God ? The worm crushed under the foot of man is not more impotent or more contemptible. There, as you stand, the strength of manhood pours through your veins, your intellect tells you that in knowledge of good and evil man is as a god, and yet, in the pride of

your being, you cannot understand what it is to die. Now is your hour, you say; but the hour passes away, and you are not. You believe—I know it; it is not that you cannot believe. It is that openly and avowedly you say, ‘Let me eat and drink, for to-morrow I die!’ And thus you would make the Word of God of none effect; and such will be the end—you will eat and drink, and to-morrow you die—unless—My son, my son! eighteen hundred years ago, an Atonement was made for man, in suffering, in agony, in shame! Your Saviour pitied you; have pity on yourself!”

Giannetto raised his head—the agony, of the struggle was visible in his haggard face, but the conquest was achieved. “Father, Father, I yield! Teach me to repent!”

Long hours through that night Giannetto and the Franciscan remained together. Giannetto made a full and free confession. No ear heard or eye saw what passed between them; but the dawn had already gleamed in the sky before they separated,—Giannetto, worn out, to throw himself on his bed; the friar to go on with his work, fasting and in prayer, before the mercy-seat of God.

The following day was Sunday, and Elvira rose from her bed about the middle of the day; but Giannetto did not come as usual to carry her into the music-room, and watch and tend her. Her father brought her in before going to mass, and they left her alone, anxious and watching for her husband’s coming.

After they were all gone, Giannetto came quietly in and stood by her side. She raised her eyes to his face, and saw that it was very pale; but there was a look in his eyes, as he knelt down beside her, that gave her heart such a strange bound of hope, that for one moment she was speechless.

He knelt on silently by the

couch, where she lay pure as a lily and almost as white, his eyes eagerly watching every movement of her sweet face.

“Nino,” she said at length, “I had a dream last night—such a strange dream! It seemed to me that I lay here as usual, and yet the room was not the same. A window was before me, the lattice set wide open; and a glorious stream of yellow light was flooding in,—and there, in the light, which shone like a golden glory, knelt our little child. Her hands were clasped in prayer, and she was dressed, like the holy Innocents, in purest white; and all around her, shadowy, till they seemed but wings of pearl, hovered the pigeons of St Mark. The child was praying, and at times she appeared to pause and listen intently. Sadness, then anxiety, then sorrow, seemed to follow each other in shades across her face as she listened—then all changed into one brilliant, radiant smile; her little hands were uplifted, her robe seemed to become a robe of glory, and a soft cloud hid her from my sight. There was a sound of sweet singing in the air, and I thought I heard the words, ‘Alleluia! Alleluia! a triumph has been won!’ Then all passed away, till I felt something soft and warm in my arms, nestling to me, and a little voice, which said, ‘Mother, mother, I have finished the work that was given me to do,’—and I awoke. It was only the first peep of dawn, but already some one was leaving the house, for I heard steps going down the street. Oh, Nino! my arms feel so empty, my heart so hungry! Nino, Nino! she never learnt to call me mother!” She hid her face, struggling with her tears.

Giannetto held her closely in his arms; then taking her small thin hands in his, he drew them on to his bowed head, as he murmured rather than spoke—“Elvira, pray

for me, that God will be merciful to me a sinner."

Elvira started up, her face beaming with a perfect joy—"Oh, my Nino, is it true? Has God granted me this precious gift? Now at last I can die in peace."

"Not die, my darling; oh, not die! Live, to help me to atone for the bitter past!"

"Ah, Nino! we will go home together, and kneel at your mother's knees, and she will bless us both, and all will thenceforth be peace." Then suddenly she added, "Let us go at once, Nino. Do not put it off one single day. The poor mo-

ther, she has watched and pined so long! Ah, how happy I am now!"

"Elvira," said Giannetto, clasping her hands, "it shall be as you say; but—but then you must learn my secret,"—and he shuddered violently. "Can you bear it?"

"Nino," she said, gently, "there are no secrets in the grave." She lay back, breathless and exhausted.

Nino went on, speaking very gently—"Elvira mine, Fra Geronimo must go with us; he would wish to be with you——"

"At the last," she finished; for he had bowed his head in grief too deep for tears.

CHAPTER XII.

The long and painful journey was over, and at last Elvira lay in her husband's early home. It had been a very difficult one: many times they had stopped on the way, terrified at the deadly weakness which crept over her, and it was always her own wish that hurried them on.

"Let us hasten, Nino," she would say—"let us hasten on; the time grows very short." The last two hours she had to be carried in a litter on men's shoulders, for the paths to San Jacopo were too rough and narrow for any other mode of conveyance.

Every comfort and luxury that she could think of had been sent on by Signora Celeste. She herself accompanied them part of the way, and then returned to Florence, by Elvira's special wish. Elvira had a sort of feeling that, in giving herself entirely to Carola's care, she should in some measure make up for Giannetto's long neglect.

Carola spent her days of expectation wandering through the house, arranging and rearranging, over and over again, the bed, sofa, and soft chairs which had arrived from Florence. Her joy in receiving again

her long-lost son was very great. She greeted him with the brightest, happiest of looks, and refrained from one word of reproach; but the sight of her worn and altered face grieved him more than any words she could have uttered.

The *Curato* was much changed; he was failing fast, and very infirm. He was glad to welcome Giannetto back; but there was a certain sternness even in his welcome which Giannetto perceived at once. The good priest was far too just-minded and honest-hearted not to show by his manner that he greatly blamed his old pupil for his long and cruel absence.

By his old companions and fellow-fishermen Giannetto was received with a good deal of awe and wonder, but little cordiality. All perceived at a glance the great disparity that had been established between them, in manner, dress, and appearance, as much as in wealth and station. It was a relief now and then to poor Carola to go out and have a comfortable chat with one or other of her friends; for the refinement that filled her own house bewildered her. "I feel

as if he were not my own son," she would say, rather piteously. "He is such a grand Signore, it would become me rather to curtsy to him, and wait upon him, than he should do everything for me, as he does now; and my daughter-in-law—alas! it is sad to see how she fades away! Truly, she is already an angel!" And the good woman brushed away a tear.

Fra Geronimo had taken up his abode in the house of young Andrea. On Sunday he preached to the fisher-congregation, and at other times visited the sick and poor, and spent his time with the good *Curato*.

It was evening. All was profoundly calm and still. The little waves came softly in, kissing the pebbles on the beach; the fisher-boats dotted the almost unbroken surface of the blue wide sea; and now and then a sea-gull, gleaming white as snow, dipped his long wings in the water, uttering his strange wild cry, and shaking off the drops, all shining, from his plumage.

Elvira lay, propped up by cushions, close to the window of her room, which looked towards the sea. It was set wide open, so that she might catch the faintest breath of air. Carola was beside her; Giannetto knelt in his customary attitude; Fra Geronimo sat like a statue, dark and motionless, in a corner of the room. Carola was telling Elvira, in broken words, the early history of her son.

"It is now," she said, "some thirty years since our Giannetto was born, and before one year had passed, his father died. It was a bitter trial to me, as you may well conceive, when years passed on, and my boy, my one comfort and hope, continued speechless. We tried to think that it was only slow development—that the power of speech would come; but, alas! more and more it grew upon us as a fact, that my child was dumb—dumb from

his birth. Giannetto, give her wine. This hot weather makes her faint, poor child!"

Giannetto gave her wine, which she swallowed eagerly. "Go on, go on," she said; and Carola proceeded:

"Giannetto was a good and loving child. For a long time it seemed as if his sad misfortune would not affect his happiness; but as he grew older, alas! they took to mocking him—boys and men would laugh at his infirmity, and make him furious. His father before him was a passionate man, but not so passionate as our Giannetto. Had it not been for the goodness of our *Curato*, I know not what I could have done. He took him somewhat off my hands, gave him an education, loved him, cared for him, and, as I thought, was curing him of all his wild vain longings. Elvira, my sweet daughter, he was such a beautiful and clever boy! None in all the country round were like him—so strong, so active! Perhaps some of the taunting arose from jealousy; for no one, in work or sport, did half so well as he: and yet they seized upon his one defect, and never gave him peace.

"So it went on. As my boy grew older, he grew more sad; and yet I know not why. I thought he was becoming more resigned. Perhaps it was that I had prayed so long—that I had learnt to think I saw my prayer's accomplishment.

"So it was—such was his state—when an English Conte came to San Jacopo; but, Elvira, you have heard all this before?"

Elvira shook her head. "Go on, go on," she repeated.

"He was a good and kind-hearted man, this Signor Conte, and he took much interest in my boy. I had saved up a little sum, but very little, for then we were very poor; and the *Curato* also had a few *lire*, but so few—for, just before, the little he had saved had all to be given away

to a poor widow who was ill. This money we had meant to lay up, and add to, till there should be enough to send Giannetto to some great doctor who perhaps might cure him; but when the Signor Conte heard our story, he proposed to take Giannetto with him to Nice, to let him see the doctors there.

"Ah! who can tell our gratitude? It seemed a gift sent straight from heaven. I wearied Madonna and San Jacopo with thanks. He was gone three days, and on the fourth came back."

Elvira started forward—"Cured? You say he was cured?"

"Alas! no," replied Carola. "He came home driven to despair; for they had told him plainly, had said that his infirmity was quite incurable—that none ever recovered who were born dumb."

Elvira sank back. Again they gave her wine. She looked faint and exhausted, but murmured still, "Go on."

"Alas! I come to the mystery of my story. He was half mad and in despair. Every day I saw how the fire was burning within. He grew reckless; he cared not what he did. But surely, surely you have heard all this before?"

"There was a storm, so wild, so terrible, it seemed a marvel that anything alive escaped; and all night long my boy was out at sea. The great waves came roaring in; the thunder crashed and rolled. Santa Maria! as we stood on the beach we thought the Last Day had come! With the first early streak of dawn I heard a strange sound from the sea. Elvira, you know it well. It was Giannetto singing. Over the storm it rose; it made me shrink with terror. For the first time I heard the voice of my son: his life was saved and his dumbness cured." She covered her face with her hands for one moment, then looked up, the tears streaming from

her eyes. "But, alas! from that time forward he never crossed the threshold of a church—he never confessed—he was spurned all holy things—he was, we feared, forsaken by his God!"

From the darkening corner where he sat, Geronimo drew near. He spoke low, and with authority. "Giannetto, the time has come; tell all."

The shadows of evening were growing deeper, and Elvira lay pale and motionless.

"Elvira, you shall know all." Giannetto's voice was so harsh and husky, that they scarcely recognised its sound. "You, who have never known such things, how can you understand what it was to me when my hopes were dashed to the ground? How can you know? You were never shut out and isolated from your fellow-men—despised, scorned, and mocked—an outcast from them all. From a child, the rebellion in my heart had been growing stronger. Why was I born? What had I done to be so miserable? One thing that always maddened me was the sound of music. I loved it with a passionate love; and, alas! it was the sound of the human voice that was my passion."

"The *Curato* once gave me a violin. I had it for some days; then I told him I had lost it. It was not true—I had broken it into a thousand pieces; for I could only produce sounds which roused up all my passionate longings, and made me more embittered than ever. He used to talk to me of resignation—it seemed such a mockery! Why should I be resigned? Why was I—I only—to be singled out for laughter and for shame? What had God done for me that I should be resigned?"

"Elvira, at this time that my mother tells you of, these wild and wicked thoughts were strongest.

It was but shortly before that the cruel blow had fallen, when they had told me I had no hope; and I was desperate.

"I was out alone that awful night, far out at sea, when the storm came on. I was mad. I longed to die. I saw Death close to me, staring me in the face; and in my frenzy I said in my heart, 'Let me curse God and die!' The waves came leaping round me; the lightning seemed to rend open all the depths of the heavens. It came on me, fiercely and more fierce, that mad thought, never to go home, but out there—alone—to curse my God and die. I was on my knees, and in my agony I cried, 'What is life to me? Only grant me the power of speech, and I care not for death or hell! Speech! speech! and I care not for my soul!' Elvira, I know not how, but either from heaven or hell that awful cry was answered. I heard the first sound of my own voice, and I sank down cowering in the boat, in a terror too great for utterance. I thought I had sold my soul! Elvira, Elvira, hear me still! He says"—(catching the monk's robe, he held it up convulsively)—"he says it may have come from God. That in that form it may have been sent as a great and terrible temptation—that my cry may have been answered from heaven, not hell. Oh, who can say what comfort these words have given me! I have thought there was no atonement. I have thought that, even if there were repentance, it would imply renunciation of my voice, my whole career. God help me! I thought that I had sold my soul! Elvira! wife!" But Elvira lay insensible.

For days after this terrible narration, Elvira hovered between life and death. At last there came a time in which they said, "All hope is over, and but few hours are left."

She lay, as usual, by the window,

paunting for air; and Giannetto alone was with her. In feeble, gasping words she spoke to him of hope to come, of pardon, and of peace. She was going home, she said, leaving him alone in the wide and weary world, perhaps through long, long years of penance, to expiate his sin. Giannetto's head was bowed, and he only reiterated—"Elvira! O Elvira! do not leave me!"

She told him she was going before—to pray for him. Once, in bitter anguish, he cried aloud, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." But she spoke on; and ever her words dwelt on the peace which passeth understanding—on the reward to be looked for, by God's grace, when the weary race is run.

And so the hours drew on.

Over the dark sea, over the silent streets, the night came softly down. One by one the large pale stars shone out in the southern sky.

Breaking the solemn watches of the night, came the low murmur of chanting and the tinkling of a little bell. Out of the church passed a slow procession, bearing the "Viaticum" to a passing soul. Two and two, followed the simple fishermen to the door of Giannetto's house, and then they knelt down in the street, and the priest and Fra Geronimo went in alone.

It was over. The last rites were accomplished, the last words said, and they thought that she slept. Giannetto knelt beside her bed, his eyes fixed on her face, his hands clasping hers.

Pale, and not understanding such a woe, the peasant-mother watched and wept; and the long hours stole on.

Suddenly burst a cry from Carola—"Giannetto! O Giannetto!"

"Hush, hush!" he said; "you will wake her—she sleeps!"

"Not sleep, Giannetto; it is not sleep, but death!"

Still he knelt on, as if he had not heard; and her hands were grow-

ing cold in his. All thought, all feeling gone, save one, that she was dead—his idol—his beloved—gone from him, and for ever!

Seeing that he did not move, Carola went out and called Fra Geronimo. Tenderly the Franciscan laid his hand on Giannetto's shoulder. "Giannetto," he said, "my son, come with me."

Gentle and docile as a child, Giannetto rose and followed him out, a broken-hearted man.

The fishermen were waiting for him outside in the street—foremost among them Pietro Zei—all eager to grasp his hands. "Giannetto! Giannetto! pardon us; we knew not what we did. Ah! pardon, pardon us!"

They thronged round him. Giannetto took Pietro's outstretched hand, raising his glassy eyes from the ground. "Friends," he said, "as I hope to be forgiven, I forgive you freely."

He went on with the friar to the *Curato's* house, leaving the rough fishermen sobbing like children.

A few days after the funeral of his wife, Giannetto left his native town with the Franciscan. I heard from the *Curato* that he had entered one of the religious orders; and some years passed away.

Once more I heard of him. We were living near Pisa; and one day, with a small number of friends, we visited a Carthusian monastery in a remote valley, which is very little known to the world in general. It was a wild, desolate place—the monks supporting themselves by the produce of their land, and by the alms bestowed on them in requital for their prayers.

There were about twelve of them at the time of our visit—fewer than usual; for fever, combined with the peculiar austerities of their order, had considerably thinned their ranks.

The women of our party were not admitted within the gates; but

I myself and a friend were taken by a lay-brother to the cell of the Superior, and round the buildings.

The Superior received us with dignified courtesy, and showed us as much of the monastery as was allowed. He conducted us into the gloomy chapel, where one or two of the white-robed monks were kneeling. They never moved when we entered, but knelt on, rigid, as if hewn out of the stone. He showed us the beautiful cloister with its twisted marble pillars and vaulted roof. On the walls, cut on the stone, were the names of the dead, their secular names as well as those adopted by them on entering the Order—the last link after death with the outer world—and among them I read this—

GIOVANNI BATTISTA NENCINI. FRA
GIOVANNI. DEO GRATIAS.

I turned to the Superior and asked him when this penitent had died. "Two years ago," he said. "Fra Giovanni led the holiest of lives. He practised every penance and austerity permitted by our rule; and from the time he took the vows, he never spoke again. No ear ever heard the sound of his voice till the last moment of his life. He died of the *malaria* in the heat of summer. He lay on ashes in the chapel, for such was his humble desire; and when the last moment came, he stretched out his arms as if to grasp some vision, and fell back murmuring 'Deo gratias.' And see, we had those words engraved below his name."

It was, from first to last, a strange story, and one that I can never forget. I wished to hear more of those years after Elvira's death; but the *Curato* was dead, and I could find no trace of Fra Geronimo. I sought after him for some time, and did not give up the quest till I had learnt that he had been sent on some far-off foreign mission in the East.

THE PAYMENT OF THE FIVE MILLIARDS.

As soon as it became known, five years ago, that France had to hand over £200,000,000 to Germany, it was generally predicted that the financial equilibrium of Europe would be upset by the transfer of so vast a sum from one country to another, and that the whole system of international monetary relationship would be thrown into confusion. Apprehensions of an analogous nature were abundantly expressed when the two French loans successively came out. Wise bankers shook their heads in Frankfort, London, Amsterdam, and Brussels, and assured their listeners that, though the money would probably be subscribed, it could not possibly be paid up under five years at least. And yet the whole of this vast transaction was carried out between 1st June 1871 and 5th September 1873; twenty-seven months sufficed for its completion; and not one single serious difficulty or disorder was produced by it. The fact was that the commercial world had no idea of its own power; it thought itself much smaller than it really is; it failed altogether to suspect that its own current operations were already so enormous that even the remittance of five milliards from France to Germany could be grafted

on to them without entailing any material perturbation. Such, however, has turned out to be the case; and of all the lessons furnished by the war, no other is more practical or more strange. The story of it is told, in detail, in a special report which has recently been addressed by M. Léon Say to the Commission of the Budget in the French Chamber. It is so curious and instructive that it is well worth while to analyse it. It may, however, be mentioned, that the order of exposition adopted by M. Say is not followed here. To render the tale clear to English readers, the form of it is changed.

But before explaining the processes by which the war indemnity was paid, it will be useful to recall the principal features of the position in which France was placed by her defeat. It is now computed that the entire cost of the campaign amounted, directly and indirectly, to about £416,000,000; and this outlay may be divided into five sections,—the first three of which were declared officially by the Minister of Finance in his report of 28th October 1873, while the two others have been arrived at by a comparison of various private calculations. They are composed as follows:—

1. *Sums paid by France for her own military operations—*

War expenses to the end of 1872, . . .	£76,480,000
Food bought for Paris before the siege, . . .	6,781,000
Assistance to families of soldiers, &c., . . .	2,000,000
Balance of war expenses payable out of the Liquidation Account, . . .	21,942,000

Total of French expenses proper, . . . £107,203,000

2. *Sums paid to Germany—*

Indemnity, . . .	£200,000,000
Interest on unpaid instalments of indemnity, . . .	12,065,000
Maintenance of German army of occupation, . . .	9,945,000
Taxes levied by the Germans, . . .	2,468,000

Total paid to Germany, . . . £224,478,000

3. *Collateral expenses—*

Cost of issue of the various war loans, rebates of interest, exchange, and cost of remitting the indemnity,	£25,247,000
Loss or diminution of taxes and revenue in consequence of the war,	14,567,000

Total of collateral expenses, £39,814,000

4. *Requisitions in cash or objects—*

Supplied by towns or individuals, including the £8,000,000 paid by Paris—estimated at .	<u>£15,000,000</u>
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5. *Loss of profits consequent upon the suspension of trade—*

Estimated at	<u>£30,000,000</u>
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RÉSUMÉ.

1.	£107,203,000
2.	224,478,000
3.	39,814,000
4.	15,000,000
5.	30,000,000

General total, . . . £416,495,000

Now, what has France to show against this?

Her annual gains before the war were put by M. Maurice Block ('Europe, Politique et Sociale,' p. 317) at £900,000,000; unfortunately he does not tell us how much of this she spends, and how much she lays by; but there is a prevalent impression in France that her annual savings amount to £80,000,000. We shall mention presently a calculation which seems to indicate that, during the later period of the Empire, they must have amounted to a considerably larger sum than this; but if we admit it, for the moment, as correct, it would follow that the cost of the war, in capital, represented five years' accumulation of the net profits of the country. It is not, however, in that form that a proportion can be established between liabilities and resources; the measurement must be made, not in capital, but in interest, for it is, of course, in the latter form alone—that is to say, in new taxation to pay interest on loans—that France now feels the pressure. That new taxation,

when completed (it is not all voted yet), will amount to about £26,000,000 a-year; and that is the real sum which is to be deducted from the annual profits of the country in consequence of the war. Now, if those profits were only £80,000,000, and if they are not progressing, but standing still at their previous rate, this deduction would absorb almost a third of them; but as they are continually advancing—as every branch of trade in France is active—as foreign commerce, which is generally accepted as a safe test of national prosperity, was one-fifth larger in 1873 than in 1869—it may fairly be supposed that, after paying the £26,000,000 of war taxes, France is effectively laying by as much as she did in the best years before the war, whatever that really was.

After this rough indication of the situation, we shall better understand the story of the five millions. It is scarcely possible to disassociate it from the general attendant circumstances of the position as a whole; the two should be kept in view together.

The payment of the indemnity, and the detailed conditions under which that payment was to be made, were stipulated in the three treaties or conventions signed successively at Versailles, Ferrières, and Frankfort, in January, March, and May 1871. It was determined by the last-named treaty that "payments can be made only in the principal

commercial towns of Germany, and shall be effected in gold or silver, in English, Prussian, Dutch, or Belgian bank-notes, or in commercial bills of the first class." The rates of exchange on coin were fixed at 3*fr.* 75*cs.* per thaler, or at 2*fr.* 15*cs.* per Frankfort florin; and it was agreed that the instalments should be paid as follows:—

30 days after the suppression of the Commune,	£20,000,000
During 1871,	40,000,000
1st May 1872,	20,000,000
2d March 1874,	120,000,000
Total,	£200,000,000

The last £120,000,000 were to bear interest at 5 per cent.

It must be particularly observed that no currency was to be "liberative" excepting coin, German thalers or German florins. The other forms of money which the German Government consented to accept, did not constitute a definite payment; it was not until those other forms were converted into their equivalent value in thalers or in florins, that the payment became "liberative." This was the essential basis of the bargain.

Furthermore, it was declared that the instalments must be paid at the precise dates fixed, neither before nor afterwards; and that no payments on account should be allowed. It was not till July 1872 that leave was given to make partial payments, but only then with the express reservation that such partial payments should never be for less than £4,000,000 at a time, and that one month's notice of them should be given on each occasion. Under no circumstances, from first to last, was any payment permitted on account.

Two main conditions, therefore, governed the operation: the first, that all payments made in anything but coin or a proper German form were to

be converted into a German form at the expense of France; the second, that the proceeds of all bills or securities which fell due prior to the date fixed for an instalment, were to be held over until that date. The dates themselves were ultimately changed—the last payment was advanced six months; but, with two special exceptions, those conditions were rigorously enforced throughout the entire business.

As the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine to the German Empire obliged the Eastern Railway Company of France to abandon all its lines within those provinces, it was agreed that Germany should pay for them, that the price should be £13,000,000, and that this sum should be deducted from the indemnity. This was the first exception. The second was, that Germany consented, as a favour, to accept £5,000,000 in French bank-notes. By these two means the £200,000,000 were reduced to £182,000,000. But thereto must be added £12,065,000 for interest which accrued successively during the transaction, and which carried the total for payment in coin or German money to £194,065,000. And even this was not quite all, for France had to furnish a further sum of

about £580,000 for exchange, and for expenses in the conversion of foreign securities into German value. This last amount does not appear to be finally agreed between the two Governments — there is a dispute about it; but as the difference extends only to a few thousand pounds, the final sum remitted may be taken at about £194,645,000, or at £199,645,000, if we include the £5,000,000 of French bank-notes. The £13,000,000 credited for the railways carried the entire total of the indemnity, with interest and expenses, to £212,645,000.

The first payment (in French bank-notes) was made on 1st June 1871. As the first loan was not brought out until the end of the same month, £5,000,000 were taken for the purpose from the Bank of France; but with that exception, and subject to temporary advances (as will be seen hereafter), the funds for the entire outgoing were provided by the two great loans; the interest was, however, charged separately to the budget. Consequently, the money was derived successively from the following sources:—

The value of the Alsace-Lorraine railways,	£13,000,000
Loan from the Bank of France,	5,000,000
Out of the first loan for two millions,	62,478,000
Out of the second loan for three millions,	120,102,000
Out of the budgets of 1872 and 1873 (interest),	12,065,000
Total,	<u>£212,645,000</u>

It is not necessary to go into the details of the dealings with the Bank of France, of the subscription of the loans, or of the dates and proportions of the payments made upon them; it will suffice to observe, as regards those elements of the subject, that though the payments on the loans came in, nominally, before the dates fixed for the delivery of the corresponding instalments to Germany, they, practically, were not always available in time. The reason was, that though the actual handing over to Berlin took place at fixed periods, the remittances themselves were necessarily both anterior and continuous, their proceeds being accumulated by French agents until wanted. The result was, that the French Ministry of Finance was under the necessity of making almost constant advances on account of those remittances. Each time a payment was coming due, the means of effecting it had to be arranged long beforehand. It

is not possible to collect or carry £20,000,000 at a week's notice; so the Treasury was of course obliged to keep on buying bills, as fast as it could get them, in order to have a stock in hand for future needs. That stock fluctuated a good deal, and there is some contradiction in M. Léon Say's report as to its amount; but it appears, at one period, to have ranged for months as high as £30,000,000, part of the cash to pay for it being provided temporarily, until the loan moneys came in, either by Exchequer bills, or by the Bank of France in notes.

There was, moreover, towards the end of the operation, an advance made specially in gold by the Bank of France; and, as the circumstances under which it was effected present a certain interest, it will be worth while to state them. In May 1873, the French Treasury had before it the obligation of providing £40,000,000 between 5th June and 5th September; £24,000,000 of bills were in

hand for the purpose, and about £10,000,000 of instalments were coming due on the loan; but there was, at the best, a clear deficit of about £6,000,000 in the resources available. The Bank of France agreed to supply that sum; but as, at that very moment, the circulation of its notes had reached £112,000,000, and as it had, consequently, only a margin of £16,000,000 between that figure and its total authorised issue of £128,000,000, it seemed dangerous to withdraw £6,000,000 of that margin in notes, and it was decided to effect the loan, by preference, in gold. It is worth remarking that this is probably the first example, in the history of national banks, of a bank electing to make an advance in gold, as being less "dangerous" than the delivery of its own notes. The French Treasury was of course well pleased to obtain bullion, which was immediately "liberative," instead of notes, which would have had to be

converted into bills at various dates. But, after all, this aid did not suffice; the incomings from the loan did not arrive, practically, in time for use, and the Treasury had to supply a further final balance of £9,760,000 to enable the concluding payment to Germany to be regularly effected.

Finally, it may be noted that there were thirty-three deliveries to Germany, the component parts of each of which were so scrupulously verified by the representatives of the Berlin Finance Department, that several days were occupied by the counting, on each occasion. Indeed, when thalers had to be told up, the maximum got through in a day never exceeded £32,000.

After these preliminary explanations we can now begin to show the means by which the transfer was performed. We will divide them, in the first instance, into four categories:—

1. German bank-notes and money collected in France after the war,	£4,201,000
2. French gold and silver,	20,492,000
3. French bank-notes,	5,000,000
4. Bills,	169,952,000
Total,	<u>£199,645,000</u>

The first observation to be made here is, that the German money found in France amounts to a singularly large sum; indeed, if this proof of its importance had not been furnished, no one could possibly have suspected that the invaders, for their personal and private necessities, had spent anything like so much. Their wants, as soldiers, were supplied, during the war, either by stores sent from Germany, or by requisitions levied in France; until peace was signed they paid for no objects of public or official need: all this cash represented, therefore, individual expenditure.

And, manifestly, the real total must have been still larger. It cannot be supposed that the whole of the German money spent in France was reserved, by its French proprietors, for sale to their own Government; it may be taken for granted that a considerable portion of it went back straight to Germany, through ordinary channels; and it may be guessed that the entire sum expended by the conquerors, out of their individual resources, in German money, was at least a half more than the amount here shown, and that it consequently attained £6,000,000. The question is curious, and this

is the first time that any official information bearing on it has been published. It remains to add, as regards this element of the payment, that, as might have been expected, the German money was included, almost entirely, in the earlier instalments, and that scarcely any of it appeared in the later remittances.

The £20,492,000 of French money was composed of £10,920,000 in gold and £9,572,000 in silver. But it should be said at once that these figures express only the amounts transmitted by the French Government officially, and do not comprise the quantities of French gold bought by Germany or forwarded by private bankers to cover their own bills; these other quantities will be referred to presently. £6,000,000 of the Government gold were supplied by the Bank of France; the rest was bought from dealers or furnished by the Treasury. Of the silver, £5,840,000 were obtained in France, and £3,732,000 were drawn, in bars, from Hamburg, and coined in Paris.

But these direct remittances of German and French cash represented, after all, only about one-eighth of the entire payment; the other seven-eighths were transferred by bills, and it is in this section of the matter that its great interest lies. It will at once be seen that, as no remittance in paper became "liberative" until it was converted into an equivalent value in thalers or in florins, the French Treasury could obtain no receipt for an instalment until all its various elements had been so converted; its object, therefore, was to obtain the largest possible amount of bills on Germany, so that, at their maturity, their proceeds might be at once available in the prescribed form. But, at the same time, it was quite impossible to collect in France

alone, within the time allowed, anything approaching to the quantity of German bills required. The result was, that it was found necessary not only to hand in a large amount of bills on other countries, which had to be converted into German values at the cost of France, but also, as regards the purchase of direct bills on Germany, to effect it frequently in two stages. In the first stage, bills were bought in Paris, as they offered, on England, Belgium, or Holland; in the second, a portion of the proceeds of those bills was reinvested, in those countries, in other bills on Germany itself. Of course the French Government was very anxious to employ every sort of means to increase the quantity of German bills, and to avoid leaving to the German Treasury the right of converting foreign paper into German value at French expense. At the origin of the operation the importance of this element of it was not fully realised; but by degrees the French minister discovered that it was far more advantageous to effect his conversions himself than to leave them to be carried out anyhow at Berlin. The result of this discovery was, that while £454,000 were paid to Germany for the cost of conversion on the first two millions, only £11,000 were paid to her under the same head on the remaining three millions; after the experience of the first twelve months, France sought for bills on Germany wherever she could get them, all over Europe; and it may be added that she was somewhat aided in the effort by the special position of Germany, who, at the moment, was in debt considerably to England not only for the war loans she had issued there, but also on commercial account as well. But, as has just been mentioned, a good many of these bills were sub-

stitutions for each other, and consequently the amount of paper shown as bought is considerably larger than the real sum paid to Germany, the reason being that a good deal of it

appears in the account twice over. The following table gives the composition of the total quantity of bills bought by France :—

Bills on Germany, bought direct, in thalers,	.	.	.	£62,550,000
Do. do. in florins,	.	.	.	9,548,000
Do. bought, in thalers, with the proceeds of other bills,	.	.	.	42,218,000
Do. in reichsmarcs,	.	.	.	3,172,000
Bills on England, in sterling,	.	.	.	61,780,000
Do. Hamburg, in marcs-banco,	.	.	.	21,432,000
Do. Belgium, in francs,	.	.	.	20,856,000
Do. Holland, in florins,	.	.	.	12,952,000
Total,	.	.	.	<u>£234,508,000</u>

These bills were paid for, mainly, in French bank-notes; and the average rates of exchange at which

they were bought came out as follows, for the entire operation :—

	Francs.
Thalers,	3.7910
Pounds sterling,	25.4943
Marcs-banco,	1.9089
Belgian francs,	1.0061
Dutch florins,	2.1500
Frankfort florins,	2.1637
Reichsmarcs,	1.2528

Every one at all acquainted with exchanges will recognise how low, under such circumstances, these prices are; and will ask, with wonder, how they can have been kept down to such averages on so large an undertaking.

But though the foregoing table shows the quantities of bills, of each kind, that were bought by the French Government as vehicles of transmission, it in no way indicates

the form in which the money was in reality handed over to the German Treasury. Most of the above figures were largely modified by conversions and substitutions; and when all the bills had been cashed—when the whole payment had been effected—it appeared that the real totals of each sort of currency which had been finally delivered to Germany were as follows :—

French bank-notes,	.	.	.	£5,000,000
French gold,	.	.	.	10,920,000
French silver,	.	.	.	9,572,000
German notes and cash,	.	.	.	4,201,000
Bills—Thalers,	.	.	.	99,412,000
Do. —Frankfort florins,	.	.	.	9,404,000
Do. —Marcs-banco,	.	.	.	10,608,000
Do. —Reichsmarcs,	.	.	.	3,190,000
Do. —Dutch florins,	.	.	.	10,020,000
Do. —(and in silver)—Belgian francs,	.	.	.	11,828,000
Do. —Pounds sterling,	.	.	.	25,490,000
Total,	.	.	.	<u>£199,645,000</u>

This catalogue shows, at last, in what shape the bills were really utilised and made "liberative," either in German money direct, or by the equivalent of foreign value in thalers or florins. The differences of composition between this definitive list and that of the bills originally bought, are only partially explained by M. Léon Say; it is not, however, necessary, nor would it be interesting, to follow out precisely the various conversions which took place;—we will only mention, as an illustration, that, out of the £61,780,000 of original bills in England, £31,687,000 were converted here into other bills on Germany, that £25,490,000 were sent to Berlin in sterling bills, and that the balance remains unexplained. As regards the direct delivery, by France herself, of English, Belgian, or Dutch bullion, the report says nothing: it is only stated, incidentally,

that £720,000 of Belgian francs were sent to Berlin in metal, and that the London agency of the French Treasury bought £1,132,000 here in gold and silver, which, probably, was also shipped to Berlin; but these are the sole allusions to the subject. It is probable, as indeed has always been supposed, that the bullion which was withdrawn, during the operation, from London, Brussels, and Amsterdam, was not taken for French account, but by Germany, out of the sums at her disposal in each place after the bills on that place had matured.

We have now before us, in a condensed form, the main elements of this prodigious operation; we see now what were the conditions which regulated it, where the money came from to realise it, how that money was successively employed, and in what shapes the payments were at last effected.

We recognise that France herself provided, in her own notes and

	coin,	£25,492,000
"	that German money and bills on Germany produced,	126,815,000
"	and that bills on England, Belgium, and Holland contributed,	47,338,000
Total,		<u>£199,645,000</u>

Here, however, we must repeat that the Paris bankers who sold drafts on Germany were obliged, to some extent, to remit cash to meet them. On this point M. Léon Say goes into calculations which we will mention presently; for the moment it will suffice to say that, according to his view, the effective transmission of bullion from France to Germany, through private hands, from 1871 to 1873, did not exceed £8,000,000 for the purposes in view here. He acknowledges, as will be seen, that the entire exportation of French gold during the three years, reached (probably) £40,000,000; but still he expresses

the opinion that £8,000,000 were all that was required, as a balance, to cover the French bills on Berlin. Of course this is a question which nobody can decide; but, to lookers on, it does seem somewhat contrary to the probabilities of such a case, that this sum can have been sufficient. It may perhaps have been enough, as M. Say says, to balance accounts in the long-run, but it is difficult to believe that it was not considerably exceeded while the operation was under execution. Furthermore, M. Léon Say makes a mistake of £10,000,000 in his account, as we shall show; and, for that reason, we believe that

£18,000,000 instead of £8,000,000 were required, so putting the whole total of French bullion temporarily used, including the £20,000,000 of the Government, at about £38,000,000, or a little more than one-sixth of the entire sum to pay. As this is certainly a maximum, it follows that France got out of this great debt with a payment of only 18 per cent of it, at the outside, in her own money. And there is good reason to suppose that all the gold exported by her has come back, and that her reserves of bullion are re-constituted at present as they were before the war.

And now we can approach the most important and interesting point in the whole transaction. How came it that £170,000,000 of bills could be got at all? We have given a general answer to the question at the commencement of this article; we will now consider it more in detail, partly with the aid of M. Léon Say's report, partly by reference to other sources of information. It appears, as might have been expected, that various measures were employed by the French Government in order to render possible the collection of such a huge mass of paper. In the first place, particular facilities and temptations were offered to foreigners to induce them to subscribe to the two loans; commissions varying from $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 per cent were offered to them—the object being to acquire the power of drawing on them for the amount of their instalments. Secondly, everything was done to encourage anticipated payments of those instalments, so as to hasten the dates at which they could be drawn for. Thirdly, as some fear was felt that the second loan might possibly not be eagerly subscribed, coming, as it did, so immediately after a previous issue which was not quite paid up,

it was thought desirable to get a portion of it guaranteed by bankers. But, in order not to risk giving to those bankers a large commission for nothing, it was stipulated with them, as a part of the arrangement, that they should supply the Treasury with a fixed quantity of foreign bills. By the two former plans of action the immense amount of £70,920,000 of drafts on other countries was obtained, £15,960,000 of which were on account of the first loan, and £54,960,000 on account of the second; and it may be remarked at once, before we proceed, that though this figure supplies decisive evidence of the fact that at least one-third of the two great loans was paid up by foreign subscribers, it is certain that nearly the entire amount has been bought back since, and that almost the whole of the new stocks is, at the present moment, in French hands. By the third plan, the bankers who formed the syndicate—and it may be mentioned that fifty-five of the first houses in Europe were associated for the purpose—engaged to supply £28,000,000 of paper. Consequently, by these admirably devised schemes, £98,920,000 of drafts were successively procured, and the exact quantity to be bought in the open market was reduced to £71,032,000.

It must, however, be observed, that though we can regard these drafts on foreign countries for loan instalments as a special product of the occasion, and are therefore justified in counting them apart, the same cannot anyhow be said of the £28,000,000 of bills furnished by the syndicate of bankers. The latter were evidently composed of ordinary commercial paper, and consequently must be added to the total which had to be supplied from commercial sources proper, so putting that total at £99,032,000.

Now bills of this sort necessarily imply an effective counter-value of some kind; so, as we have already seen that at the outside only £18,000,000 of that counter-value was supplied in bullion, there remained at least £81,032,000 of bills which must necessarily have been based on ordinary trading or financial operations. What were those operations? Very often the general character of a bill is indicated on its face; but in this case a test of that kind could not be applied, not only because there were so many bills to handle that a serious examination of their nature was impracticable (there were, in all, one hundred and twenty thousand of them, of every conceivable amount, from £40 to £200,000), but also because every possible kind of business transaction must have been represented in that accumulation of securities from all parts of the world. Bank credits, circulation bills, settlements for goods delivered, remittances on account of future purchases, drafts against the coupons of shares and stocks, special paper created for the occasion—all these forms, and many others, too, were, according to M. León Say, included in the collection. It was not possible to seek out in detail the origins and meanings of such a varied mass; but we may take M. Say's general description of it to be true, not only because it corresponds with probabilities and experience, but also because he was himself Minister of Finance during a part of the operation, and has therefore a personal knowledge of its main circumstances. Researches, however, which could not be attempted with the bills themselves, may be practically and usefully pursued if they are directed towards the general signs and symptoms of the financial state of France. It is probable that a relatively small amount of bills was

created specially to be sold to the French Government. We may, indeed, take the supposed £18,000,000 of exported bullion as indicating the approximate extent of uncovered or manufactured paper; all the rest was evidently based on mercantile transactions. Now we know that mercantile transactions imply the delivery of property of some kind, and that the two main forms of property, commercially, are merchandise and stocks. It is therefore necessary, in order to arrive at an idea upon the question, to glance at the actual position of France in her dealings with other nations in these two values.

We have already alluded to the development of French trade, and to the general influence of that development on the payment of the war indemnity as a whole; but we must go into a few figures here in order to make the bearings of the subject clear. The value of the foreign commerce of France—importations and exportations together—was £257,000,000 in 1871, £293,000,000 in 1872, and £301,000,000 in 1873. Now it will be at once recognised that the amount of bills necessitated by this quantity of commerce, supplied a solid foundation for carrying the additional paper whose origin we are now seeking to discover. M. Say is of opinion that scarcely any part of the indemnity bills was furnished by the current commercial trade of the country; but, as we have just seen that the quantity required from trading sources was £81,000,000, or about £40,000,000 per annum, it does seem to be possible, notwithstanding his contrary impression, that some portion of that relatively reduced quantity may have been found in the ordinary commercial movement. For instance, it may reasonably be argued—as

indeed M. Say himself admits—that bills drawn against French exports to Germany or England would be included, to some extent, amongst those which were offered to the Government. There seems to be no reason why this should not have been so.

But if M. Say considers that the habitual commercial paper of France has not been of much service to the Treasury in its conduct of this operation, he holds a totally different opinion with reference to the influence of the foreign investments of the French people. What he says on this subject is new and curious, and is well worth repeating.

He begins by stating, with an appearance of much truth and reason, that for many years before the war, French capital was being continuously invested in foreign securities; that the sums so placed have been estimated by different economists at from £30,000,000 to £60,000,000 a-year. Here, however, before we follow out his argument, we must open a parenthesis, and observe that if even the smaller of these figures is exact, the computation of £80,000,000 of annual savings, which was alluded to at the commencement of this article, must be altogether wrong. It is manifestly inadmissible that France can have been investing in foreign countries three-eighths of her whole net yearly profits. Consequently, we may legitimately suppose that the popular impression about the £80,000,000 is a delusion, and that France is in reality laying by a vast deal more than that. If so, the ease and speed with which she has recovered from the war would be comprehensibly explained. M. Léon Say goes on to tell us that French investments in foreign stocks amounted in 1870 to so large a total, that the dividends on them represented, at

that date, about £25,000,000 a-year, for which sum drafts on other countries were of course put into circulation by its French proprietors. Furthermore, the revenues of the strangers who live in France come to them principally from their own country; and it is estimated that, before the war, £10,000,000 or £12,000,000 of such incomes were drawn for annually in the same way. Consequently, on this showing, it would appear that somewhere about £35,000,000 or £40,000,000 of French drafts on foreign countries were created every year from those two sources. It is, however, certain that this quantity has diminished since the war, by the departure of some of the strangers who used to live in France, and also by the sale, in order to provide funds for subscription to the two new loans, of some of the foreign securities held in France. But M. Léon Say considers that the annual diminution, on both heads together, does not exceed £4,000,000, and that at least £30,000,000 of paper, representing cash due to France on account of incomes from abroad, irrespective of commerce properly so called, were drawn in 1871 and 1872. In support of these considerations, he mentions, amongst other facts, that in 1868 and 1869 the coupons paid in Paris on Italian stock alone amounted to £3,400,000; while in 1872 and 1873 they fell to £2,400,000. On this one security, therefore—which is, however, probably held in France in larger proportions than any other foreign stock—the diminution of income since the war amounts to £1,000,000. With these figures and probabilities before him, he concludes by expressing the confident opinion that, as French purchases of foreign stocks have ceased, to a great extent at least, since 1870, and as remittances of French money to pay for such pur-

chases have consequently ceased as well, the drafts on other countries for coupons and revenues became entirely disposable for transmission to Berlin, and that it is here that the main explanation lies of the facility with which the bills were found. This theory is ingenious, and it is probably, in great part, true.

The movement of the precious metals forms a separate element of the subject, and one that is not easy to trace out; for in France, as in most other countries, the public returns of the international trade in specie are very incomplete. We know how much gold and silver are raised from mines, and how much thereof is coined by each country; but we are very ill informed as to what becomes of them when once they have issued from the Mint. On this head also, however, M. Léon Say has collected some valuable facts. The Custom-house Reports inform us that during the three years from 1871 to 1873, £53,400,000 of bullion were exported, and £50,480,000 were imported; on this showing, therefore, the loss of bullion was only £2,920,000. But as private information gave good reason to believe that the amounts must have been in reality considerably larger, calculations have been made in order to arrive at a more correct conclusion. It appears, from official publications, that the stock of gold and silver in the Christian world is supposed to have increased by £371,000,000 from 1849 to 1867; but the augmentation has not occurred in both the metals—it has taken place in gold only; the quantity of gold is greater by £428,000,000, while, in consequence of exportations to Asia, the quantity of silver has diminished by £57,000,000. Now, out of this £428,000,000 of new gold, France alone, in the first instance, received

more than half; at least we are justified in supposing so, from the fact that, during the same period, the Paris Mint converted £230,000,000 of bar gold into French coin. Of course this quantity of gold did not remain permanently in France; its whole value was not added in reality to the general French stock of metal: as gold arrived in France silver went away; indeed it is imagined that, out of the £200,000,000 of silver which have been coined in France since the year 1800, only £40,000,000 remained in the country in 1869. It is, however, calculated that the £100,000,000 of hard cash, gold and silver together, which were said to really belong to France in 1848, have doubled since; and M. Wolowski, who is regarded as an authority on such questions, declared in the French Chamber, on 4th February last, that, in his opinion, the national stock now ranges between £200,000,000 and £250,000,000.

But whatever be the interest of these computations, and useful as it may be to count up the amount of bullion which has come into France, we must look elsewhere for information as to the quantity of it which the consequences of the war took out. We know that the German Mint melted down, for its own coinage, £33,880,000 of French napoleons. It is also known, says M. Léon Say, that the Bank of England, bought nearly £8,000,000 of the same sort of money between 1870 and 1873. Here, therefore, we can trace the passage out of France, since the war, of nearly £42,000,000 of her gold. But, as Germany drew from London £1,680,000 of the napoleons which she put into the furnace, it may be that that sum was included in the £8,000,000 of the Bank of England, and is therefore counted twice.

For this reason the amount really sent to Germany and England may be put at £40,000,000. M. Léon Say adds, that the Bank of Amsterdam bought a further £3,600,000 of French gold; but, as he fancies that this may not have come direct from France, he does not add it to the total, and he holds to £40,000,000 as representing probably the effective loss of gold which France had to support after the war. Of this sum, £10,920,000 were exported to Berlin, as we have already shown, by the French Government itself; the other £29,080,000 were consequently carried out by private firms for transmission to Berlin, and for various other purposes. Silver, however, arrived in considerable quantities to replace the gold. £9,500,000 of silver were coined in Paris between 1870 and 1873; and the Custom-house returns, which are almost always below the truth, show an importation of £12,160,000 of it. From all this, M. Say concludes that £40,000,000 of gold left France; that £12,000,000 of silver came to her; and that the £28,000,000 of difference between the two represents the real total loss of bullion which the war entailed.

But in making this calculation M. Léon Say commits a most wonderful mistake; he entirely omits to take account of the £9,572,000 of silver which the French Government sent to Berlin, and which must, of course, be added to the outgoing. When this strange error is corrected, the loss becomes, not £28,000,000, but £38,000,000, of which the Government exported £20,000,000—leaving, apparently, £18,000,000, instead of £8,000,000, as the sum contributed by private bankers. This difference of £10,000,000 in the issue of the calculation gives some value to another computation which M. Léon

Say has made, but which would have had no foundation if this error had not existed. He says—probably with some truth—that the quantity of money in circulation in a country remains usually at the same general total, during the same period, whatever be the nature of the various elements which compose it. He then goes on to argue that as the issue of French bank-notes was £44,000,000 higher in September 1873 than in June 1870, that increase ought to approximately indicate the amount of metal withdrawn in the interval from circulation, and replaced by notes. But, according to his theory, that amount of metal did not exceed £28,000,000, leaving an excess of £16,000,000 of notes, which excess he explains by saying that it represents an equal sum in gold which the French people had hidden away! Now everybody knows that the lower classes of the French people do hide money—do “thesaurise,” as they say; but such an explanation of the missing £16,000,000 is so purely imaginary that it cannot merit any serious credit. The theory assumes, however, a very different form when the error of the £10,000,000 is corrected. In that case we have an extra issue of £44,000,000 in bank-notes, corresponding to a loss of £38,000,000 in gold and silver; and there the two figures get sufficiently close to each other for it to be possible that there really is some relationship between them, without being forced to resort to the possible but improbable solution of the *thesaurising*.

Consequently, with all these various considerations before us, it seems reasonable to suppose that the natures of the bills employed to pay the war indemnity were of three main classes, and were grouped approximately in the following proportions:—

Drafts for foreign subscriptions to the loans, . . .	£70,920,000
Bills against French bullion specially exported, . .	18,000,000
Commercial bills and drafts for dividends and revenues from abroad,	81,032,000

General total of bills,	£169,952,000
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Before we proceed to sum up the case, and to try to draw from it the teaching it contains, there is one more detail which is worth explaining.

We have alluded to the coining in Paris of a certain quantity of Hamburg silver. To make the story of it clear, it is necessary to remind our readers that, according to the constitution of the Bank of Hamburg—which dates from 1619—accounts were kept by it in a money called marc-banco, and credits were opened by it in that money on the deposit of silver—coined or uncoined—the value of that silver being calculated pure. By degrees the marc-banco, though only an imaginary money, grew to be the universal denominator employed in the home and foreign business of Hamburg; it acquired an importance greater than that of the effective money of many German States. But when the Empire was established, and it was decided to introduce a gold standard into Germany, it became essential to suppress the marc-banco, for it had the double defect of representing silver and of forming a separate value outside German monetary unity. So it was abolished by law and ordered to disappear—the plan adopted being that the Bank of Hamburg should liquidate its deposits, by paying off, in pure silver, the marcs-banco in circulation. It was, however, stipulated that this right should cease on 15th February 1873, and that, after that day, all persons who held securities in marcs-banco should lose the old right of receiving pure silver, and should only be entitled to half a

thaler for each marc-banco, that being the value of the silver represented by the latter. Now the French Treasury had bought, as we have seen, £21,000,000 of bills in marcs-banco, and consequently possessed the right of claiming silver for such of them as fell due before 15th February 1873, while all the rest, from that date, were payable in thalers. The thaler was “liberative,” while the marc-banco was not; but the pure silver which the marc-banco represented could be coined into five-franc pieces, and be delivered to the German Government at the rate of 3 francs 75 centimes per thaler. The result was, that being by far the largest holder of marcs-banco paper, the French Treasury was able for a time to control the Hamburg market, and it naturally used for its own advantage the power which this position gave it. The Hamburg Bank was utterly unable to deliver the quantity of silver for which France held acceptances in marcs-banco; it was absolutely in the hands of the French Minister of Finance: that functionary appears, however, to have acted very fairly—to have only asked for silver in moderation, and to have profited by his power solely to obtain conversions into thalers on good conditions. The result was, as we have said, that £3,732,000 of Hamburg silver came to the Paris Mint, partly through Government importations on marcs-banco bills, partly through private speculators, who followed the example of the Treasury, and pressed the Hamburg Bank for metal.

Such are, in a condensed form,

the essential features of the history of this extraordinary operation ; and now that we have completed the account, we need no longer delay the expression of our admiration of the consummate ability with which it was conducted. Its success may be said to have been, in every point, complete ; we cannot detect one sign of a grave hitch or of a serious error in it. It does the highest honour to the officials of the French Treasury, and proves that they possess a perfect knowledge of exchange and banking, both in their minutest details and in their largest applications.

When we look back upon the subject as a whole, three great facts strike us in it. The first, that France is vastly rich ; the second, that the trade of Europe has attained such a magnitude that figures are ceasing to convey its measure ; the third, that the aggregate commercial action of nations is a lever which can lift any financial load whatever. As we see the transaction now, with these explanations of its composition before us, we cannot fail to recognise that it has been rather European than purely French. All purses helped to provide funds for it ; all trades supplied bills for it. In every previous state of the world's commerce such an operation would have been impossible ; fifty, thirty, twenty years ago, it would have ruined France and have disordered Europe ; in our time it has come and gone without seriously disturbing any of the economic conditions under which we live. France, out of her own stores, has quietly transported to Berlin a quantity of bullion larger than the whole ordinary stock of the Bank of England ; and yet she shows no sign of having lost a sovereign. She has paid, in her bank-notes, for £170,000,000 of transmission paper, and yet the

quantity of her bank-notes in circulation is now steadily diminishing. Such realities as these would be altogether inconceivable if we did not see their cause behind them : that cause is simple, natural, indisputable ; its name is the present situation of the world's trade. The vastness of that trade explains the mystery.

But yet, with these advantages to help it, the operation had, in addition to its enormous size, certain special difficulties to contend with. As one example it may be mentioned that, amongst the elements of perturbation and of consequent impediments to remittance, the French Government had to keep in view the fact that, at the very moment when it needed all the monetary facilities it could obtain, the German Government was locking up gold in its cellars, in order to provide metal for the new coinage it was preparing. This was a most unlucky coincidence ; but it existed, and it had to be met. The German plan was to hold back the issue of the new money until £30,000,000 of it were ready to be exchanged for the old silver currency ; consequently, no silver could be expected to leave Germany until some months after the date at which the gold had been brought in there ; and, during the interval, France knew that she must suffer from the withdrawal of so much bullion from the general market. But she found assistance in an unexpected way ; silver did flow back to her at once from Germany, without waiting for the issue of the new gold currency. France paid Germany £9,572,000 in French silver ; but this was of no use to the latter : on the contrary, it was an embarrassment to her ; for she was on the point of exporting a quantity of her own silver, which would become superfluous as soon as the new gold got into circulation. So, for this reason, a

considerable portion of the French five-franc pieces came back immediately to France, and helped to re-constitute her store.

And all the other difficulties were, more or less, like this one. At first sight they looked grave and durable, but they diminished or disappeared as soon as they were seriously attacked; the whole thing turned out to be an astonishing example of obstacles overrated. The unsuspected wealth of France, assisted by an extent of general commercial dealings which was more unsuspected still, managed to get the better of all the stumbling-blocks and impossibilities which seemed to bar the road. France has lost £400,000,000, one-half of which she has delivered to her enemy, and yet she is going on prospering materially as if nothing at all had happened. But it is now quite clear that she never could have managed all this alone; she could have found the money, but never could she, single-handed, have carried

it to Germany. It is there, far more than in subscriptions to her loans, that the world has really helped her; she has bought back the stock that foreigners subscribed for her, but she could not do so without the bills they sold her. If she had been left to her own resources for the transport of the indemnity to Berlin, she would probably have been forced to send two-thirds of it in bullion, and to empty her people's pockets for the purpose; the vastness of the world's trade and the unity of interests which commerce has produced, permitted her to use other nations' means of action instead of her own.

Viewed in this light, the payment of the five millions becomes an enormous piece of admirably well arranged international banking, in which nearly all the counting-houses of Northern Europe took a share. That definition of it is worth knowing, and we may be glad that the information given in M. Say's report has enabled us to arrive at it.

THE STORY OF VALENTINE;

AND HIS BROTHER.

PART XIV.—CONCLUSION.

It was the beginning of May when the party went home, and everything was green on Eekside. Were I to describe all that happened before they left Oxford, so strange a family group as they were—the old Lady Eekside with the tramp-woman, the high-bred Secretary of Legation, along with Styles's head man—and how they managed to exist together, the lion with the lamb—I should require a volume. But this would weary the reader, who can easily imagine for himself that any happiness which might be produced by this reunion of the divided family was counterbalanced by many circumstances which were not happy. The grandparents, I think, would have been really happy in the removal of all mystery from their family story, the complete establishment of the rights and heirship of their beloved Val, and the winning qualities of Dick, but for the sudden chaos into which they were re-plunged by the mother's calm declaration of Dick's seniority. Its effect upon them was indescribable. Richard, with his diplomatic instincts, seeing that his sons had not paid any attention to, or even heard, this extraordinary statement, hushed it up with an impetuous and peremptory promptitude which took even his father and mother by surprise, and silenced them. "Not another word," he whispered to them; "not a word! the boys have heard nothing; for the present let nothing more be said;" and the old couple, in the suddenness of this strange juncture, let themselves be overruled,

and left the guidance in his hands. As for the mother herself, she attached no weight to the circumstance. She was too ignorant to know, and too much abstracted in her mind to think, that it made any difference which was the eldest. She had not kept Dick for that reason, nor had she left Val at Rosseraig with any intention of avenging herself upon the family by thus substituting the youngest for the just heir, which was the first thought that crossed Lady Eekside's mind. No; she had been guided by mere chance, as we say, snatching up the one boy instead of the other in her despair, for the most trivial reason, as the reader may recollect. And even now it did not occur to her that what she had said was of any consequence, though she saw it affected the others in some incomprehensible way. Her mind had no capacity for entering upon such a question. She was far more deeply moved by the chance that Valentine might be tired out—more solicitous to know whether it was time for his beef-tea. Richard kept his parents quiet until Val had gone to bed, and Dick to sit by him and read to him, when the three had an anxious consultation; and the packet of papers which Richard had brought from Italy, and which up to this moment had remained unopened, was examined, and found to confirm, with frightful accuracy, the statements of the mother. There it was incontestable, Dick was set down as the eldest, notwithstanding the impression upon Richard's mind which, on Val's first

appearance, had led to the mistake.

This confirmation subdued them all into a kind of despair. Lord and Lady Eskside, both at different times, had received Dick into their affections, as they thought, and acknowledged, with a certain pride, his natural worthiness. But when it appeared possible that this new and unknown boy (though they liked him) might put himself in the place of their Valentine—the child of their old age, the light of their eyes—their hearts sank within them. All their satisfaction and enthusiasm was chilled, nay, frozen; they sat and looked at each other blankly, their gladness turned into dire disappointment and heaviness. Then it was that Richard urged upon them the necessity of silence. "Let us take time to think," he said; "time is everything. Val, it is clear, can bear no further excitement; it might be fatal to him; nor can it be good for the other boy. He is an honest, kind fellow; but how can we tell if his head is strong enough to bear such a change of fortune? Let him get used to the part of younger brother first. For heaven's sake, let us hold our tongues, and say nothing more about it now."

Lord Eskside shook his head; but my lady seconded her son, alarmed at the idea he had skilfully brought forward of danger to Val. "Yes, he is a good honest fellow," they both said, but with an involuntary grudge against Dick, as if it could be his fault; and the papers were put up carefully in Lord Eskside's despatch-box, and the news still more closely locked in the bosoms of the three who knew the secret. But it is astonishing how their knowledge of this took all heart out of their conscientious effort to adapt themselves to the new state of things. Valentine, whatever his internal difficulties were, accepted the position

much more easily. His illness softened it to him, and had already produced that familiar intercourse with his mother and brother, which the mere discovery that they were his mother and brother could not have brought about; and the happiness of convalescence which glorified all the circumstances about him, made it still more easy. He lived a life of delightful idleness, feeling nothing but benevolence and kindness for every created thing, how much more for his tender nurses and companions?—getting well, eating and sleeping, and loving idle talk, and to have all his people about him. He was so much a child in this, that even his father, whom Val had never been familiar with, came in for a share of his sociable affectionate desire to be always surrounded by the group of those who belonged to him. He called for everybody, with that regal power which is never possessed in such perfection as by an invalid, to whom all who love him are bound by a hundred ties of gratitude and admiration for having been so good and so clever as to get well. He could not bear a look too serious, a clouded face, and was himself as cheerful as the day, enjoying everything. Dick, I need not say, had told him of that meeting with Violet, and of his letters to her, and by this means Val had got up a spring of private delight for himself—carrying on a limited but charming correspondence, which, indeed, was all on one side, but which still gave him infinite pleasure. "Keep up the Brown delusion, Dick," he said, with infinite relish of the fun, "till we go home; and then we'll tell her. What a joke, to be sure, that you should ever have been Brown!" And indeed this was already the aspect the past had taken to both the young men; and it was the strangest absurd thing, scarcely comprehensible,

how they could ever have believed it. The two had no share in the perturbation of their elders. Good Dick was, as he had said, more the servant of that young demigod and hero than if he had not been his brother. He did everything for him—read to him, talked to him, brought him the news, and lived over again every day of their intercourse since that day when they first “took a liking to each other.” How strange it all seemed—how extraordinary, and yet how natural—in face of this broad and obvious explanation, which made everything plain!

I need not say that it was also the idea of Richard Ross to put into the Edinburgh paper that cunning intimation that the young member for Eekshire had been taken ill at the house of his mother, the Hon. Mrs Richard Ross, at Oxford. Scarcely a soul who read that intimation ever thought of anything but the luxurious and dignified dwelling which an Hon. Mrs Ross would ordinarily inhabit; and the people who knew Oxford tried hard to recollect whether they had ever met her, and where her house was. The county in general was much perplexed and much affected by this notice. It seemed impossible to believe that there was any specious falsehood in so matter-of-fact a paragraph. “The old stories must all be false,” one said to another; “Richard’s wife has been living separate from her husband, that is all.” “But no one ever heard whoshe was,” the doubting ones said; though even the greatest sceptic added, “I will ask my son if he has ever met her in society.” Thus Richard’s diplomacy had full success. He followed it up by other delicate touches, bulletins of Valentine’s recovery, and tantalising hints such as only local gossip can permit, and which were reserved for the pages of the ‘Castleton Herald’—of the happy

domestic *rapprochements* which the Editor was delighted to hear Mr Ross’s illness, otherwise so regrettable, was likely to bring about. All this made a great commotion in the district. You may think it was beneath the dignity of a man of Richard Ross’s pretensions to descend to such means of breaking to the public a great family event, which might otherwise have been differently interpreted; but your great man, and especially your *diplomate* and courtier, is always the one most disposed to make use of flunkeyism and the popular love of gossip. It is a sign, perhaps, of the cynical disregard of this elevated class of mortals for ordinary people; anyhow, they rarely hesitate to avail themselves of means which would wound the pride of many less exalted persons. Life, like dreams (to which, heaven knows, it bears in all matters so close a resemblance), goes by contraries. What the poor and simple scorn, the rich and wise employ.

The Eekshire people, however, were destined to yet another sensation more startling than this. It was in the nature of a recantation, and few recantations have excited more local interest. I will not attempt to describe all the motives and influences which were supposed to have brought it about—for the reader is better informed, and knows that it was brought about very simply, as perhaps some of his own good deeds are, by the intervention and pertinacity of a slim girl with a soft voice and a pair of pleading eyes. Nobody on Eekside knew that Violet, at the point of the sword as it were, had extracted an apology from her father. It appeared on the walls in the shape of a placard, about the middle of April, and was sent by post to all the influential persons in the district. Lasswade was white with it, every bit of fence possessing the paper. It was ad-

dressed, like another notable letter, to the Electors of Eskshire; but it was much shorter than the former one. What it said was as follows :—

“GENTLEMEN,—It will be within the recollection of all of you that, a few months ago, I thought it my duty to address to you a letter concerning the standing and pretensions of Mr Valentine Ross, now Conservative member for this county. It seemed right that you should take into consideration what then appeared to me the very doubtful proofs of Mr Ross’s identity. I am strongly opposed to him and his family in politics; and I confess I thought it my duty to indicate to you in the distinctest manner how poorly supported by fact were his claims to your confidence. I am a Whig, and Mr Ross is a Tory, and I do not pretend to be above the ordinary tactics of electioneering, which have been pushed to further lengths than were possible to me, by men of much higher worldly pretensions than myself. But whether as Whig or as Tory, I hope it will always be an Englishman’s highest boast to be an honest man; and circumstances have convinced me that it is my duty to convey to my brother electors an Apology for statements which I formerly made to them under the influence of a mistake, and which I now find are less certain than I then thought them. It is no disgrace to any man to have fallen into a mistake, if, when he discovers it, he takes pains to undo any mischief it may have produced.

“With this preface I will simply say, that though it is quite true, as I stated, that Mr Valentine Ross appeared at his grandfather’s house in a very strange and suspicious way, the inference I drew from that is, I have reason to believe, incorrect. It does not become me to

enter into the private history of a family so well known in this county; but I believe steps will shortly be taken to remove all possibility of doubt upon the subject; and I can only say that I for one am now convinced that our new member has the fullest right to the name he bears. These important facts have only come to my knowledge within the last fortnight; and I consider it my duty, putting aside all false pride, which so often hinders a man from acknowledging a mistake publicly made, at once to communicate this discovery to the electors of Eskshire. I am as far from agreeing with Mr Ross and his family politically as I ever was; but I cannot continue to do a social injury to any man after I have found out that my impression was a mistaken one. If I have conveyed a prejudice against Mr Valentine Ross to the mind of any brother elector, I can only add that I am unfeignedly sorry for it.

“AN ESKSIDE ELECTOR.”

This was the first thing that met the eyes of the travelling party when—duly heralded by the Castleton paper, which in its last issue had announced the approaching return of “Lord and Lady Eskside, the Hon. Richard and Mrs Ross, Mr Valentine Ross, M.P. for Eskshire, and Mr Richard Ross the younger”—they arrived at Lasswade. The old lord himself was the first to read it when they got out at the little railway station on the new branch line, which, as everybody knows, is still a mile or two distant from the village. There were two carriages waiting—the great barouche, which was Lady Eskside’s favourite, and a vehicle of the genus dog-cart for “the boys;” and the usual little commotion which always attends an arrival left a few minutes to spare while the carriage drew up.

Lord Eskside came and took his old wife by the arm, and led her to the place where this address, blazoned in great letters, "To the Electors of Eskshire," held a prominent position. "Is it something new?" she asked with a sickness at her heart; "oh, don't let Val see it!" When she had read it, however, the old pair looked at each other and laughed with tremulous enjoyment. I am afraid it did not occur to them to look at this as a high-minded atonement, or to see any generosity in the confession. "Sandy Pringle is worsted at last," the old lord said, with a gleam of light from under his eyebrows. But the exhilaration of unquestionable victory filled their hearts, and made them forget for the moment the other drawbacks which attended their return.

With this sense of having beaten their adversary strong in their minds, they no longer hesitated to drive home through Lasswade, which they had not intended to do; where they had a most flattering reception. What with the curiosity excited by this probable *éclaircissement* of a romantic story, and the eagerness of everybody to see Richard Ross's wife, and the new excitement produced by that placard on the walls—which most people, I fear, received as Lord Eskside received it—every one was agog. It was not a formal entrance with triumphal arches, &c., for this is not a kind of demonstration very congenial to the natural independence of the Lowland Scotch mind, which is much disposed to be friendly towards its great neighbours, but very little disposed to feudal notions of the respect due to a superior. Willie Maitland, it is true, had once thought of suggesting something of the sort, but he had fortunately forborne; and accordingly, though there was an absence

of flags and decorations, a very warm spontaneous welcome was given to the travellers. They stopped at the door of the Bull, and the carriage was instantly surrounded by a genial crowd, attracted, it is true, quite as much by a desire for information, as by a wish to do honour to Lord Eskside's family; and there, sure enough, by my lady's side sat the unknown Mrs Ross, looking out with large eyes, in which a certain terror and wonder combated the look of abstraction which was habitual to them. She had been here before—how well she remembered how! not in the chief street, honoured of everybody, but dragging through the muddy roads, dull and despairing, with her two crying children. The cold wild March night of her recollection was not more unlike the soft sunshine of this May-day, than was her own position now and then. Was she more happy? She did not ask herself the question. Only people in a more or less artificial state of self-consciousness do ever ask themselves if they are happy or not; the uninstructed soul takes life as it comes. But her aspect impressed the people of Lasswade. They concluded that she was "not very happy with her husband;" and as Richard was not popular in the county he despised, this rather prepossessed the popular mind in her favour; but that this woman had ever been the "beggar-wife" of the popular legend, the county ever after refused to believe.

The Dowager-Duchess had driven into Lasswade, of course "by accident," on that afternoon, and so had Sir John and his lady; and it is astonishing how many other carriages of lesser potentates the Eskside party met on their way home. It was a fine day to be sure; everybody was out; and every separate detachment of anxious neighbours had its own remarks to make.

"The second son looks a fine lad," the good people said; for indeed Dick had beamed with grateful smiles upon every one who had a welcome for Val. And thus the family, at last united, with glad welcome of all their neighbours, and retractation of their enemy's slanders, made their way home. "You see we've brought Sandy Pringle to his marrow-bones, my lord!" cried Willie Maitland the factor, my lord's right-hand man, as they drove away from the door of the Bull, "Ay, ay, the auld sneckdrawer!" said Lord Eskside in his glee. This was all Mr Pringle made by his apology. Val, I am happy to say, was otherwise disposed—he took it generously, touched by the confession, not triumphing in it, as extorted from his assailant; and his explanation of the placard, which he too had read eagerly, to his brother and confidant, was made in a very different tone. "I knew old Pringle was a good fellow," said Val; "he was forced to it by his party; but the moment he hears the truth he comes forward and owns it like a man. Our fathers and mothers think differently from us, Dick, old fellow. They think because old Pringle is out of it so long as you and I are to the fore, that therefore he must be our enemy. I always knew it was nothing of the sort, but only a party move," said Valentine, flourishing his whip with that delicious sense of generous superior wisdom which dwells in the bosom of youth; and then he added, softly, "After this, surely they can't make any more row about Violet and me."

"I should think not," said Dick, with a sigh; the sight of those Eskside woods, where he had seen her, came back to his mind with a strange thrill. What a moment of enchantment that had been! He had never hoped it would come back again.

How could he wish it to come back, when only by injury to Val it could ever bring any happiness to him? And, to be sure, he had only seen Violet twice, never long enough to—"What a lucky fellow you are!" was what he said.

"Am I not?" cried Val, in his frank happiness; "I should think this was the very last stone rolled out of my way."

There had been a great commotion in Rosscraig, preparing everything for the family party; the new wing had been opened, the carpets put down, the curtains up, and everything arranged according to Lady Eskside's orders. The new wing had all kinds of conveniences in it—sitting-rooms for the young couple for whom it was prepared, nurseries for the children, everything that could help to make it agreeable to a son's family under the same roof with his father and mother. But as it happened now, both Richard and Valentine prepared to keep their old rooms; and the new wing was given up to Dick and his mother, to whom it appeared a wilderness of grandeur, confusing and blank in its extent and wealth. It had windows which looked down upon the wooded bank of the Esk, and windows which looked to the great door and courtyard, and a suite of rooms through which you could wander from one side to another, for it ran all the breadth of the house. I am not sure that these two, transported into that luxurious place, did not feel the change more painfully and strangely than its natural occupants would have done had they been suddenly dismissed to Styles's riverside cottage. The mother felt it most of all. She sat in her own rooms almost all the day, patiently receiving the visits of her sons and of Lady Eskside, but never seeking them in the other portions of the

house—brightening to see Val, but saying little even to him. She was chilled and stifled by all these fine surroundings. Often she would rise and fling the windows open, or pull at the curtains instinctively, as if to pull them down. "I can't breathe," she would sometimes say to Dick, with a plaintive tone in her voice. Her life, such as it was, was gone from her. She was quite submissive, doing all that was asked of her, attempting no resistance. I cannot explain the entire cessation now of the struggle which she had kept up so long, any more than she could. Fate was too strong for her, and her strength was waning; but when she yielded, she yielded altogether, unreasoning and unreasonably, as she had struggled—her mind was not capable of compromise, or of making the best of a position. When she gave in she dropped her arms entirely, and with her arms her strength.

And strangely enough, Val, the sight of whom had kept her alive, lost his power now over his mother, and Dick, who was her own, became all in all to her. She was happy only when her familiar companion was by her, and could not be persuaded to go out except with Dick. Sometimes when they wandered into the woods a gleam of something like pleasure would come upon her face. There was one knoll which they found out by chance in the very heart of the trees, a little bank which, when they discovered it first, was covered with late primroses. The trees were very thick round, and the sun came late, and penetrated but a short time through the heavy boughs; and this, I suppose, kept them later in blooming than their rustic neighbours. It is long, long since I have seen these flowers; and perhaps it is the misty glory of that morning-time of childhood that makes me feel there never were any

such primroses before or after in this commonplace world—so large, so spotless, so full of sweetness, instinct with a lovely life of their own, friends rather than flowers. Their long stalks thrilled with a youthful force of existence, their green cool leaves overlapped each other, glistening with heavenly dew, their celestial petals were not like pale gold or soft velvet, which are the first vulgar images one thinks of, but like themselves only—primroses, the very essence of spring and fragrance and everlasting youth. When I shut my eyes I can see them still, lifting up their lovely heads out of their leaves, looking you and heaven in the face with all the candour of innocence, though it is, oh, so many years since they and I saw each other! When Dick and his mother, wandering through the woods, came to this bank, it seemed to touch her heart as nothing had done. She sat down on the grass and gazed at the flowers in a transport. "If we were as we used to be," she said, "oh, Dick, my lad, how you would have run to the cart for a basket! It seems no more than waste to gather them now. What would we do with them? there's grander flowers in all the rooms; they'd be like you and me, Dick, out of our place. Flowers were always what I liked. I never was one for saying much," she went on reflectively, "but a basket of primroses, that speaks for itself."

"How you go back upon the old days, mother!" said Dick, regretfully, and perhaps with a slight reproach.

"Yes, lad; I liked them best. It's heavy on me to be shut up in houses. I was never used to it," she said, with a sigh.

"But you can put up with it, mother?—you *will* put up with it?—for the sake of Val—and me."

A gleam came from her eyes—a sparkle of tenderness and light. "I'll

do what's best," she said—"what-ever is best:" then with a sudden rush of tears, "You may let me think of the old days, Dick; for my strength's changed, and my mind's changed, and I never can go back to them—never no more—even if I would."

"But, mother," said Dick, "it used to keep you happy to see Val only on the river, once a-day or twice a-day, in his boat. I did not know why it was then; but I saw it; and now you've got him altogether——"

"Ah, it's different, it's different!" she cried; "can't you see, lad? Then he was none o' mine—he was his father's; it was more than I could have hoped for to see him like that—it kept me alive. Now he'll come to me when I like, Dick; and kind he looks and kind he speaks, God bless him! He'd do himself an injury to please me; but ah, it's different! If I could take them to the market in a basket, and sell a bunch here and a bunch there, that's what I would like," she went on with a sudden change of tone, drawing the flowers through her thin hands.

It was with a kind of despair that Dick took her home. She was getting thin visibly, he thought. She would sit at the window for hours together, gazing, seeing nothing. For the first few days she suffered herself to be taken to the family meals, but this evidently agitated her beyond endurance, and had to be given up. What was to be done? Not one of them could tell, or indeed form an idea; the only thing that could be trusted in was time, which might possibly bring back a subdued harmony to those chords which at present were all ajar; but for the moment there seemed little hope even of that. All the restlessness of old came back to her. When the active habits of

her life at Oxford became unnecessary, the self-restraint she had learnt there failed her also. She took to talking (when she did talk) of nothing but the tramp-life, which seemed to have suddenly come into prominence in her mind. Now and then she dozed in the long afternoons, and Dick heard her murmuring in her sleep about the long road, and how far it was, and the lad that was tired. Poor Dick's satisfaction in his new circumstances was suddenly subdued by this. It did not occur to him that she was ill; he thought it was one of the old fits coming on, in which he had always felt the dreadful risk there was that she might go secretly away from him, and never be heard of more. To be sure, he comforted himself by thinking these fits had always gone off again, and so perhaps would this one now.

Thus the family life recommenced under its changed circumstances. I doubt whether any one in the great house was happy. The old people had a secret in their keeping, which destroyed their peace, and which must produce further troubles still; and Dick had his mother, whose state alarmed him: and Richard Ross was in a position very difficult for a man to bear, totally ignored by his wife, yet feeling a curious secret attraction towards her, and a half-whimsical half-tragical wonder whether they were ever to be drawn closer, or if all was over between them. Valentine, the happiest of the party, was not without his troubles too, for he had written to Violet, and received no reply, and at the Hewan there was no intelligence to be obtained of her. Thus they had all enough to do to carry on the possibilities of living; and the great happiness and good fortune which had come to them, scarcely looked for the moment like good fortune at all.

CHAPTER XLI.

A short time after their return, Valentine made up his youthful mind that he could bear his share of these uncertainties no longer. He had been to the Hewan again and again; now he set off to Moray Place itself, saying nothing to his relations, except to Dick, who winced, but kept his counsel. But all the ardent young lover made by his persistence was an interview with Mrs Pringle, who received him stiffly, and declined to answer any inquiries about Violet, who was absent from home. "I do not suppose your family would be pleased if they knew; and my family would be still less pleased, that Violet should be held cheap," said Mrs Pringle. "If you will believe me, Valentine, I think it is much better that there should be no more about it;" and all Val's remonstrances and pleadings were of no avail. He came back miserable and dejected, and strayed out to the woods, in which there is always some consolation for a heart-broken lover. Val went as far as the linn, that he might see the place at least where he had been so happy. Was it possible, after all he had gone through, that his love and his happiness were to end like a dream, and every link to be snapt between him and Vi? When he approached that spot which was so full of associations, he too heard sounds, as Dick had done, which told of some human intrusion into this realm of woodland and waters. It was not a sob this time that Val heard. It was a sound of low voices—women's voices—talking in a half-whisper, as if they feared to be discovered. Drawing near, trembling, like a thief, he saw under the big beech-branches a corner of a blue dress, showing from behind one of them. This made his heart beat;

but the blue gown might not be Vi's blue gown; and anyhow there were two of them, as the voices testified, so that caution was needful. Another step, however, relieved him of his doubts. In front of him, on the green bank on the river-side, sat Mary Percival, with her face turned towards some one unseen, to whom she was talking. "My dear, he has had plenty of time to write to you, and he has not done so. If you will believe me, Vi, I think it is a great deal better there should be no more about it." These were, though Mary did not know it, the self-same words under which Val was suffering. The repetition of them drove him beyond himself. He gave a shout of indignant protestation, and rushing between the two astonished ladies, caught her of the blue dress rudely, suddenly, in his arms.

But do not think Violet was half so much surprised as middle-aged Mary was, to whom this interruption was quite unlooked for. She did not know even that "the family" had arrived at Rossraig—Lady Eskside, amid all this tumult of events, having become remiss in her correspondence, and Val's letters to Violet having been, if not suppressed, yet detained at Moray Place during the girl's absence. Even if the family had returned, Mary felt there were a hundred chances to one that Val would not be there precisely at the right moment to meet her and her companion. In Mary's own case things had never happened just at the right moment; and therefore she had acquiesced with little difficulty in Violet's prayer that she might be allowed "one look" at the linn. Violet had been sent to Mary to be taken care of—to be kept out of danger; and this, I am ashamed to say, was

how Miss Percival, who had a strong vein of romance in her, notwithstanding all her good sense, fulfilled her trust. 'She saw her folly now when it was too late.

"Valentine!" she cried, "how dare you—how dare you do *that*—when her parents do not know?"

"Her parents!" said Val, equally indignant; "what do I care for her parents, or any one's parents? I am a man, old enough to know my own mind, and so is Vi. Can parents make us happy?" said the young man, with that cruel frankness which seems so easy to the young, and is so hard upon the old. "Vi, my darling, you know you are mine—you won't let parents or any one come between you and me?"

Vi did not say a word—there was no need for anything so feeble as words. She clung to him, gazing at him, holding one of his arms fast with her small hands clasped round it. She had been sure he would come; in her heart she had been so wicked as to smile at Mary's faith the other way, though she did not say a word of the sweet confidence in her own mind. And Mary, who had not been so treated by Providence, and whose love had not been happy, felt a hot flush of anger against the girl who stood there before her with ineffable smiles, not objecting to the young man's impetuosity, not even answering him a word.

"Violet!" she cried, "come away this instant. Do you know that you are defying both your mother and me?"

"You have always been my enemy, Mary," cried Val, passionately, "and I don't know why, for I have always liked you. Vi, you are not going to do what she tells you—to follow her instead of me?"

"I am not going to follow any one," said Vi, detaching herself from his arm with much dignity; then

she stood at a little distance, and looked at him with tender glowing eyes. "Oh, Val!" she cried, "but I am glad to see you! I thought you would never come. I knew you would be here to-day. Val, are you well—are you quite well? Oh, what a weary, weary time it has been, when I thought I would never see you more!"

"Then you were thinking of me? and you don't mean to cast me off, Vi?"

"I—cast you off!—that is likely! Mary, you never were Val's enemy, though he says so, in his hasty way—he was always hasty. He made me give him my promise here, beneath this tree. I cannot take back my word; I cannot say one thing to you and another to him; and you never scolded me when I said I—cared for Val, Mary! not a word! She only cried and gave me a kiss."

"And she ought to give me a kiss too," said bold Val, going up to Miss Percival, whose heart was melting altogether away in her bosom, and whose efforts to look stern were becoming almost ludicrous. The audacious boy went up to her, while Vi looked on thunder-struck at his boldness, and kissed Mary's cheek, which flushed crimson under the touch, making that middle-aged woman look a girl again. "How dare you?" she cried, putting up her hand to push him away; but Mary's strength was not able to resist this. "God bless you!" she said, next moment, the tears coming to her eyes, "you bold boy! How dare you kiss me? Though I am your enemy, I've thought of you and prayed for you morning and night ever since I parted from you, Val."

"I know that very well," said the young man, composedly; "for whatever you may say, how could you be my enemy when I am fond of you? You have not the heart

not to help us, Mary. Come and sit down again and let us think what to do. Here is where we played truant when we were children. Here is where you brought us, Mary—you—when we were older; and here is where Vi gave me her promise. This is the place of all others to meet again. As for any pretence of separating us, how can any one do it? Think a little," said Val, standing before the fallen tree on which Vi had sat with poor Dick, and from which she now regarded him with soft eyes suffused with light and happiness. "Could they be hard upon *her*, for the first time in her life, and break her heart? Is that reasonable? As for me," the young man said, raising his head, while the two women looked at him with tender envy and admiration, "there is no interference possible. I am a man and my own master. So now that you are convinced," cried Valentine, putting himself beside Violet on the old trunk, which, old as it was, had put forth young shoots of life and hope to make itself fit for the throne of so much love and gladness, "let us consider what is the best means to clear these trifling temporary obstructions out of our way."

I don't think there is anything so silken-green, or that makes so tender a canopy over your head, and shows the sky so sweetly through them, as young beech-leaves in May, just shaken out of their brown husks, and reclothing, as if with tenderest ornaments of youth, the big branches that bear them. Stray airs rustled through them; stray sunbeams, for the day was cloudy, came and went, penetrating now and then through the soft canopy—punctuating with sudden glow of light some one or other of those bold arguments of Val's, which told so well upon his sympathetic audience. Though Violet was not one

of the worshipping maidens of modern story, but thought of Val only as Val, and not as a demigod, the soft transport of reunion, the glow of tender trust and admiration with which she regarded that delightful certainty of his, which no terrors shook, gave to her soft face a look of absolute dependence and devotion. She looked up to him, as they sat together holding each other's hands like two children, with a sentiment which went beyond reason. He was no wiser nor cleverer, perhaps, than she was; but he looked so strong and so sure, so much above feminine doubts and tremblings, that the mere sight of him gave confidence. As for Mary, seated on the green bank in front of these two, who was ever so much wiser and cleverer than Val (he had few pretensions that way), she, too, felt, with a kind of philosophical amusement at herself, the same sense of added confidence and moral strength as she looked at the boy whom she had watched as he grew up, and chided and laughed at—whose opinion on general subjects had no particular weight with her, yet who somehow gave to her experienced and sensible middle-age a sensation of support and certainty, which the wisest reason does not always communicate. Mary looked at the two seated there together, hand in hand, half-children, half-lovers, under the soft shadow of the young beech-leaves, with that "smile on her lip and tear in her eye" which is the most tender of all human moods. Pity and envy, and amusement, and an almost veneration, were in her thoughts. How innocent they were! how sure of happiness! how absolute in their trust in each other! and, indeed (when the case was fairly set before them), in everybody else. Notwithstanding the one terrible shock his faith had received—a shock which

happily had worked itself out in bodily illness, the most simple way—Val was still of opinion that, if you could but get to the bottom of their hearts, all the world was on his side. He had no fear of Violet's mother, though for the moment she had crushed him; and, to tell the truth, after his fever, Val had altogether forgotten Mr Pringle's offence against him, and all the harm it had brought. Now that offence was more than past, for had it not been confessed and atoned for, a thing which makes a sin almost a virtue? Nor was he alarmed when he thought of the old people at Rosscraig, who had humoured and served him all his life. What was there to fear? "It would be against all reason, you know," said Val, "if our course of true love had run quite smooth. We were miserable enough one time to make all right for the future; but if you mean to be miserable any more, Vi, you must do it by yourself, for I shan't take any share."

When a young man thus makes light of all difficulties, what can a sympathetic woman do? Before many minutes had passed, Miss Percival found herself pledged to brave Violet's father and mother and overcome their objections. "They have never crossed her in their lives, and why should they now?" said Valentine, with good sense, which no one could gainsay.

When this chief subject had been fully discussed, and all their plans settled, both the ladies drew close to him with breathless interest, while he told them the story of his own family. How Dick was his brother, which made Violet start and clasp her hands, saying, with a sudden outcry, "I always knew it!" and how his mother had come back with them—had come home. It was Mary who, much more than these two young people, who were

so sure of each other, had her heart played upon like an instrument that day. She sat quite still and never said a word, while the story was told. I cannot describe her feelings towards the woman who (she felt, though she would not have acknowledged it) had been in the very bloom of her youth preferred to herself. It was not *her* fault; up to this moment the woman who was Richard's wife had never so much as heard of Mary's existence; no blame could possibly attach to her. A strange mingling of curiosity about her, interest, half-hostile, in her, wondering indignation, disapproval, proud dislike, all softening back into curiosity again, were in Miss Percival's mind; but no one knew how she rung the changes upon these different sentiments as she sat quite still and quiet, listening, now and then asking a question, feeling as if her own life had come to some strange crisis, although she had absolutely nothing to do with it, not so much as one of the servants in the house. And then Valentine's way of speaking of his mother—the lower, hushed, respectful tone, the half-mystery, half-reverence, which he seemed disposed to throw around this gipsy, this tramp, who had given them all so much trouble—gave Mary a secret offence, all the more sharp that she felt his feeling to be quite right and just and natural, and would not for the world have expressed her own. Just now, half an hour ago, he had put her in the place of his mother—had taken her interest for granted, had kissed her (the spot burned on Mary's cheek at the thought), and appealed to that strange sentiment in her heart which he seemed to be unconsciously aware of—that sense of the possibility that she might have been his mother, which was always more or less in her mind in Val's presence. He had

taken possession of her in this way, of her sympathy and help, telling her what she was to do, and how to do it, amusing her by his arbitrariness, while he melted her heart by his affectionate confidence. And now all at once, in the same breath almost, he began to talk of his real mother, this woman whom no one knew, who had done him and his family all the harm possible, and now was brought back almost in triumph to reap—not the whirlwind after having sown the wind—but happiness and calm weather, notwithstanding all her folly and ill-doing. Mary sat in a maze, in a dream, while all this went through her mind, yet with all her faculties alert, hearing everything and feeling everything. She was hurt even by Val's description of his mother's beauty, which filled Vi with such admiring interest. "Oh, how I should like to see her!" cried Violet. "You shall both see her," said Valentine, with the arbitrary determination to give pleasure of a young prince. How Mary's heart swelled! But if these two children had guessed what was going on in her mind, with what wondering grieved disapproval they would have looked upon her, troubled by a sense of natural incongruity that a woman of her age could possibly feel so! She felt this along with all the rest; and, in short, she was conscious of so many different sentiments, that all her vigour and natural power went out of her. Her heart was being lacerated by a hundred needle-points and pin-pricks—like a pin-cushion, she said, faintly trying to laugh to herself.

Val went with them to their carriage, which was waiting at the lower edge of the woods, in the opposite direction from Rosscraig, and took a farewell, which he declared to be the merest temporary good-bye, but which once more made

Violet's eyes tearful. Vi grew less certain as she lost sight of him. Various unexpected results had followed the publication of that Apology, which in her youthful heat and energy she had almost forced her father into writing. Even Mrs Pringle had not seen the necessity for it so clearly as Violet did; and the world in general on both sides of the question had taken it, as Lord Eskside did, as a formal retraction, a bringing down to his marrow-bones of Sandy Pringle, rather than as the prompt and frank and generous apology of one gentleman to another. Some had said that it was fear of an action for libel which had moved him to such a step; others, with a frank malediction, had d—d him for not standing to what he had said. Nobody had appreciated his motive, or understood Violet's childlike reasoning on the abstract principle, that when you have done wrong and know it, there is no course possible but to confess the wrong and ask pardon of the injured person. This, I fear, is not a course of action at all congenial to the ordinary code; and Mr Pringle, though carried away by the impetuosity of his daughter, had by this time repented his *amende honorable* quite as much as he repented the evil he had done. To suffer for doing wrong is reasonable; but it is hard to be punished for doing right, and fills the sufferer's heart with bitterness.

Mr Pringle had been very penitent towards poor Val before the days of the Apology; but now, in the sharpness of the sting of unappreciated virtue, he was furious against him. Violet knew this only too well, and her courage oozed out of her finger-ends as she saw the young hero disappear into the woods. "Do you think—do you really think—it is all as certain as he

says?" she said to Miss Percival, with tears in her soft eyes, which had been so bright with happiness and courage a moment before.

As for Valentine, he strode home through the woods very triumphant and joyful, as became a young lover; but sobered as he drew near home. He had made up his mind to go at once into the matter, and extort a consent from everybody; but as he drew near and nearer to the turrets of Rosscraig, it became more and more apparent to him that there would be no small trouble and pain involved; and he began to feel how disagreeable it is to displease and vex the people most near to you, even in order to secure for yourself the person dearest and nearest of all. This thought did not subdue his resolution, but it subdued his step, which became less and less rapid. Nothing in this world would have induced him to give up Vi; but he did not like to defy his old grandfather, to make my lady set her lips firm in that way he knew so well. He wished intensely that Vi and he could have been happy without that; but still, as it had to be done some time or other, it was better, much better, that it should be done at once. So, after walking very slowly the last mile of the way, he suddenly, to use his own phraseology, "put on a spurt," and skimmed over the last quarter of a mile, making up his mind, as if for an operation, to get it over. He walked straight into the library, still flushed from his long walk; and somewhat to his surprise found all the family authorities collected there, my lord and my lady and his father, all apparently engaged in some mysterious consultation. Val remarked with bewilderment that his father, so placid usually and indifferent, was flushed like himself,—though with speech, not exercise—and that Lord and Lady Eskside

had both a doubtful tremulous aspect, and looked morally cowed, not convinced. To tell the truth, they had been arguing the question over again, whether it was possible to keep the secret of Dick's seniority from the two young men. It was Richard's desire that this should be done; but he had not convinced the others either of the possibility or expediency of it, though, for the moment, they had come to a conditional bargain to say nothing unless circumstances should arise which made the disclosure necessary. This supposed emergency was to be left to each one's private judgment, I suppose, and therefore the secret was pretty sure of rapid revelation; but still the old pair were not satisfied. "Good never came of falsehood, or even, that I know, of the mere *suppressio veri*," Lord Eskside had said, shaking his head, just as Val came in; and they all turned to look at him, with a little wonder and excitement; for he looked indeed very like a man who had found something out, coming in hot haste to tell it, and ask, Is this true? The old lord and his wife looked at each other, both of them leaping to the conclusion that this was so, and that Val had discovered the secret; and they were not sorry, but gave a little nod of secret intelligence to each other. Poor Val! poor boy! it was another trial for him; and yet it was best, far best, that he should know.

"Grandfather," said Val, plunging at once into the subject, bringing in an atmosphere of fresh air and youthful eagerness with him, "I have come to tell you at once of something that has happened to me. It is strange to find you all sitting here, but I am heartily glad of it. My lady, you know how long it is since I first spoke to Violet——"

"Oh, Violet!" cried my lady, with an impatient movement of her

head and stamp of her foot upon the carpet; "Lord bless us! is it this nonsense he has got in his head again?"

"You may call it nonsense if you like," said Val, seeing somehow that what he had said was not what they expected, and unconsciously, in an under-current of thought, wondering what it was they had expected; "it is not nonsense to me. I went to Moray Place this morning, having heard nothing of her for a long time—and there Mrs Pringle received me very coldly——"

"That was unfortunate," said Richard, with a smile, which his son called a sneer; "that an Edinburgh lawyer's wife should receive Lord Eskside's grandson coldly, was, no doubt, something very miserable indeed—enough, I suppose, to justify this excitement," and he looked at Val with an amused scrutiny from head to foot, which made the young man wild with irritation. He had stumbled into a burn on his way home, and had left, there was no denying it, one huge muddy footprint on the spotless carpet, which had at once caught his father's fastidious eye.

"The Edinburgh lawyer's wife may not be much to you, sir," said Val, "but she is a great deal to me; for she has my future wife's comfort and happiness in her hand. I want to let you know at once that my mind is quite made up and decided. I told you so before. What is the use of wearing our hearts out by waiting and waiting?" cried Val, turning from one to another. "You are good and kind, why should you make me miserable? In everything else you have always tried to make me happy; you have listened to what I had to say; you have been always reasonable; why should you shut your hearts against me now, in the

one matter that is most important to me, in that which must decide my happiness or misery all my life?"

"The argument is well put," said the old lord, with exasperating composure; "but, Val, how can you tell at your age what is, or what is not, to decide the happiness of your life?"

"And don't you see, Val," said my lady, more sympathetically, "that it is just because it is so important that we cannot give our consent so easily? Oh, my dear, if you had wanted the moon we would have tried to get it for you; think, then, how strong a motive it must be that makes us cross you now!"

"What is the motive?" said Val, with sudden dramatic force, waiting solemnly for an answer. The two old people looked at each other again and trembled. What could they answer to this impetuous boy? The motive was that Violet was not a great match for him, such as they had hoped for—not any one who would bring him wealth or distinction, but only a girl whom he loved; and they quailed before the boy's look. If they had been a worldly pair the answer would have been easy; but these two high-minded old people, who had trained him to scorn all that was mean, and to hold love high and honour, how were they to state this plain fact to a young lover of three-and-twenty? They did not know what words to use in which to veil their motive and give it some sort of grandeur worthy the occasion; and, unfortunately, Val saw his advantage as clearly as they saw the disadvantage under which they lay.

"You speak like a foolish boy," said his father. "It is enough that we think this match a very unfit one for you, and I hope you have sense enough yourself to see its unsuitability. Who is this girl? an

Edinburgh lawyer's daughter—a man who has attacked your family in the basest and most treacherous way——”

“But who has apologised!” cried Val; “who has confessed he was wrong and begged pardon——”

“The more fool he,” said Richard, “not to have strength of mind to stick to his slander when he had committed himself to it. Apology!—you mean retraction—extorted, no doubt, from him by fear of his pocket. It would be more dignified, no doubt, to pay the twopence-ha’penny he can afford to give her, as his daughter’s portion, rather than as damages in a court of law.”

“If it is a question of twopence-ha’penny,” said Val, with a violent flush of sudden anger.

“My boy, you must not use that tone here,” Lord Eskside interposed. “Your father is right. Is it your enemy that you want to ally yourself with? he that raked up the whole old story of your coming here, and tried to ruin you with it, using his falsehood for your destruction——”

“Grandfather,” said Val, still flaming with nervous passion, “the sting of that story, I have always understood, was that it was not false but true.”

“Val!” cried Lady Eskside; but there was a pause after this—and I think in the very heat of the discussion the old lord felt with secret pleasure that his boy had already made more than one point, even though it was against himself. Twice over Val had silenced the opposing forces. Now, but to live to see him facing the House of Commons like this, who could tell, from the Treasury bench itself! This delightful secret suggestion crept into Lord Eskside’s heart like a warm wind loosening the frosts.

“Then if you will only consider,”

said Val, changing his indignant tone for one of soft conciliation and pleading, “there is no one in Scotland, so far as I can see, so free to choose for myself as I am. If you were not what you are, sir, the first man in the county, as you ought to be—if my father were not what he is, distinguished in other circles than ours—then, perhaps, I, who as yet am nobody, might have required to look outside, to get crutches of other people’s distinctions; but as it is, what does it matter? We are rich enough, we are more independent than the Queen, who, poor lady, must always consider other people, I suppose; whereas I, who am your grandson—and your son, sir—I,” cried Val, “am more free than a prince to ask for love only and happiness! Give them to me,” he said, holding out his hands with natural eloquence to the two old people, who sat looking at him, afraid to look at each other; “you never in all my life refused me anything before!”

I cannot tell how it was that this natural noble attitude in which his son stood, asking, like a loyal soul as he was, for that consent, without which he could not be wholly happy, to his happiness—affected almost to rage the mind of Richard, whose mode had been entirely the reverse; who had plucked in hot haste, without sanction or knowledge of any one, the golden apples which had turned to ashes and bitterness. To marry as he had done, wildly, hotly, in sudden passion,—is not that much more easily condoned by the great world in which he lived, which loves a sensation, than a respectable mediocre marriage, equally removed from scandal and from distinction? To marry a gipsy, or an operadancer, or a maid-of-all-work, is more pardonable, as being a piquant

rebellion against all law and order, than it is to marry a virtuous person out of the lower circles of good society, sufficiently well-born and well-bred to make no sensation. The lawyer's daughter was gall to Richard. He interposed with one of those sudden fits of passionate irritability to which his smooth nature was liable.

"Do not let this folly go any further, Val. We all know what is meant by these ravings about love and happiness. Whatever place I may have gained among men it is not from having been my father's son; neither will that serve you as you think. Lord Eskside's grandson!" said Richard, with scorn on his lip; "how much will that do for the younger of you two—the one who is not the heir," he continued, with rising energy—"the one who has a second son's allowance, a second son's position; the one—whom we have all agreed in cheating out of his rights——"

"Dick?" said Val, with hesitation and wonder. He looked round upon them all, and saw something in their eyes which alarmed him he could not tell why. "Is it Dick?"

"Valentine," said his father, suddenly coming up to him, seizing his arm, "it is not for me to speak to you of the miseries of a foolish marriage; but look here. Give up this boyish folly. You have a foundation, as you say, built up by those who have gone before you; you may make any match you please; you may cover all that has gone before with the world's pardon and more than pardon. I look to you to do this. I can give you opportunities—you will have countless opportunities; give up this girl who is nobody—or if you refuse——"

"What then, sir, if I refuse?" Val loosed his arm from his

father's hold and stood confronting him, steadfast and erect, yet surprised and with a novel kind of pain in his eyes. The two old people gave one look at each other, then paused breathless to hear what was to come next, both of them aware that Richard, diplomatist as he was, forgot himself sometimes, and perceiving that the crisis, which in their previous talk they had prepared for, had now arrived.

"Then," said Richard—he paused a moment, and all the old prick of a jealousy which he had despised himself for feeling, all the old jars of sensation at which he had tried to laugh, which had arisen out of the perpetual preference of Val to himself, surged up for one moment in his temper rather than his heart. The weapon lay at his hand so ready; the boy was somehow so superior, so irritating in his innocence. His face flushed with this sudden impulse to humiliate Val. "Then," he said, "perhaps you will pause when I tell you, for your good, that you have totally mistaken your own position; that you are not the great man you think yourself; that though you have condescended to your brother, and patronised him, and been, as it were, his good genius, it is Dick who is Lord Eskside's heir, and not you."

Lady Eskside started with a low cry. It was because Dick had come in a moment before at the door, in front of which his father and brother were standing; but Richard thought her exclamation was because of what he said, and turned to her with a smile which it was not good to see.

"Yes, mother," he said, "you wished him to know. *Benissimo!* now he knows. He has been the grand seigneur, and Dick has been nobody. Now the positions are reversed; and I hope his magnanimity will bear it. Anyhow, now,

with his second son's allowance, he will be obliged to pause in this mad career."

"Is it so?" said Val, going forward to the table, and, I confess, leaning upon it a hand which trembled—for he had been thunder-struck by this revelation—"is it so?" No one spoke; and poor Val, standing there with his eyes cast down, had, I avow it, a bitter moment; but the very sting of the shock stimulated him, and called all his faculties together. After that minute, which felt like a year, he raised his head with a glimmer of painful moisture in his eyes, but a faint smile. "Well," he said, "at all events there can never more be any doubt about me, who I belong to, or what position I hold. I wish Dick all the luck in the world, and he deserves it. He'll be sorrier than I am," said Val. "What,

grandmamma, crying! Not a bit of it! I shall be as happy as the day is long with my second son's allowance; and Vi!—for of course," he added, with a bright defiant smile all round, "there can be no possible objection to Vi now."

Dick had been standing quite still behind, moved not by curiosity, but by that respectful attention to the preoccupation of the others, which I suppose his former lowliness had put into him, though it is the highest grace of a gentleman. He had heard everything, indeed, but his mind was too full of something else to care for what he had heard. He broke in here, with a new subject, in a voice hoarse with anxiety and emotion. "Has any one seen my mother?" said Dick. "I have been all over the house looking for her, high and low."

CHAPTER XLII.

That had been a weary morning in the new wing. Dick had gone to Edinburgh with his brother, half by way of seeing the beautiful town, half to console Val, who was very eager and anxious. With a curious interest he had walked about Moray Place, to which he had directed his letters in the strange old time when he was still Dick Brown,—a time which it gave him a certain vertigo to think of. And I am sorry to say that Val, in the heat of disappointment, when he came out from Mrs Pringle's presence, forgot that his brother was walking about on the other side of the square waiting for him, and had rushed back to Lasswade without ever thinking of Dick. When he saw that he had been forgotten, Dick too made his way to the railway, and went back; but it was afternoon when he arrived at Rossraig. He

had never left his mother for so long a time before, and this, no doubt, had its effect upon her. She was alone in the beautiful rooms of the new wing all the morning. It was like a silent fairy palace, where everything was done by mysterious unseen hands; for the sight of servants fretted her, and she would not admit any personal attendance. She had grown feeble in that lonely splendour without any notice being taken of it; for Dick, with the inexperience of youth, made no observations on the subject, and to Lady Eskside, who visited her every day, she asserted always that she was quite well. More feeble than ever she had got up that morning, and dressed herself as usual, and taken her sparing breakfast with Dick. After the first few days, Lady Eskside had yielded to this arrangement, seeing it impossible, at least

for the moment, to habituate the new-comer to the family table. "If it is such a distress to her, why should we force her to it?" said my lady, not without offence; and the poor soul was grateful for the exemption. "Don't find fault with me, Dick," she said to him faintly; "it can't be for long. I'll get used to it, and easy in my mind before long;"—and therefore she had been sorrowfully left to herself in the beautiful new rooms furnished for her three-and-twenty years before. When Dick left her she went to a little room in the front part of the wing, which looked out upon the great door and court, where she sat watching till the two young men went away, and waved her hand in answer to their salutations. Valentine had already paid her a visit in the morning, a visit which he never neglected; and wherever they were going, the young men never forgot to look up to that window from which it was her pleasure to watch their movements, one of the few pleasures she had.

When they had left the house she had no more interest in it. She wandered back again through various empty rooms to the great handsome sitting-room, which had a lightsome bow-window looking out upon the sloping bank of wood down to where the Esk foamed and tumbled below. Had she had any work to do, as in the days when she was Dick's housekeeper, and kept all his treasures in order, and prepared his simple meals, she might have forgotten herself and got through the weary hours. But she had nothing to do, poor soul! She sat down in the window, and passed she did not know how long a time there, gazing vaguely out, sometimes thinking, sometimes quite vacant: in so hazy a state was her mind that it seemed to her sometimes that soft Thames flowed at her feet instead of the brawling Esk;

and that she was waiting till Mr Ross's boat should come down the gentle river. Poor bewildered soul! a haze of times and places, of the vacant present, and the gleams of interest which had been in the past, possessed her mind; she scarcely could have told where she was had any one asked her. The silence grew painful to her brain, and reeled and rustled round her in eddies of suppressed sound all centring in herself; and now and then the light swam in her eyes, and darkened, and there was an interval in which everything was black around her, and all that she was aware of was that rustle, overpowering in its intensity, of the silence, raying out in circles, like those in water, from her brain. I almost think she must have lapsed into some kind of faint, without knowing it, in those moments. About noon Lady Eskside came to see her, and did, as she always did, her very utmost to win some sort of hold upon her. She talked to her of the boys, of Val who must soon go to London, of trifles of every description, working hard to rouse her to some interest. "I wish you would come with me," my lady said; and she was glad afterwards that she had said it. "I am alone, and we would be cheerier together, we two women, when all the others are away. Won't you come with me, Myra? My woman, you look lonely here." "I am used to be alone," she said quite gently, but without moving; and half provoked, half sorry, the old lady had at last gone away, despairing in her mind, and wondering whether it had been kind to bring this wild creature here even in her subdued state, and whether she would ever find any comfort in her life. "Perhaps when Richard goes," Lady Eskside said to herself; for Richard's influence did not seem to

be advantageous to his wife, though he was very careful, very anxious, not to step over the distance which she had tacitly placed between them, though strangely tantalised and excited by it as his mother saw. What was to be done? The old lady shook her head, and took refuge with her old lord in the library, not saying anything to him to vex him, for what could he do? but finding a little consolation in her own vexation and perplexity in being near him. How different that silent support and society was from the solitude in the new wing, and even from Richard's dainty and still retirement, where he wrote his letters, with his noiseless Italian servant close at hand to answer every call! It eased my lady's old heart, which had felt so many pains, only to walk into the library where her old lord sat, and put up the window, or down the window, and look at the letters on his table, and say something about the weather or the garden—just as it eased Lord Eskside, when he was in any perplexity, to go into the drawing-room, and pronounce the novel on her table to be "some of your rubbish, my lady," and let her know that the glass was falling, and that she had better take precautions about her drive. Lady Eskside wondered with a sigh whether it would ever be possible to bring her new guest—her strange daughter-in-law—into the household life. She meant nothing but kindness towards her; but there was—how could she help it?—a little impatience in the sigh.

After that visit the recluse in the new wing was left to herself again, and all kinds of strange thoughts came up into her heart. They were not so articulate as Lady Eskside's; but somehow there arose in her, as the old lady went away, a curious reflection of her impatience, an incoherent desire to call her

back again. She sat and listened to her steps going all the way along the corridor, and down the stair, and never opened her lips nor made a movement to detain her; and yet there rose in her mind a mute cry, could the dull air but have carried it without any action of hers. She caught the sound of Lady Eskside's sigh, and, for the first time, a dim understanding of it seemed to dawn upon her mind. Why could not she go with her—make herself one with the others? The thought was very shadowy and vague, like a suggestion some unseen observer had made to her; but it raised a visionary ferment in her soul, a gasping for breath, as if she already felt herself confined within an atmosphere where she had no room to breathe.

Then she took refuge in her own room in this painful rush of new feeling. The curtains at the windows, the hangings of the bed, the draperies everywhere, seemed to shut her in and cut short her breath. The great glass which reflected her figure from head to foot, the other lesser ones which multiplied her face, glancing back resemblances at her as if she, in her solitude, had grown into half-a-dozen women, affected her imagination wildly. She left that room like one pursued—pursued by herself, always the worst ghost of solitude. Then she went to the little room with the window which commanded the great door. Perhaps by this time the boys might be come back; and the boys formed her bridge, as it were, into the world, her sole link of connection with life in this artificial phase. A little warmth, a little hope, came into her as she sat down there and strained her eyes to watch for some sign of their coming. After a while, the door opened and Richard came out. He stood on the great steps for a moment,

putting on his gloves, then, looking up, saw her, and took off his hat to her ; then he made a pause, as if in doubt, drew off the gloves again, and went back into the house. At this sight a sudden wild panic came upon her. She thought he was coming to see her, which indeed was the purpose with which he had turned back. She sprang up, her heart beating, and flying through the lonely rooms, seized a shawl which lay on a chair, and darted down a little stair in the turret which led into the woods. Her excitement carried her on for some distance before her breath failed her altogether, though her heart beat loud in her bosom, like some hard piston of iron, swinging and creaking in fierce unmanageable haste. She had got into the shrubberies, not knowing where she went, and sank down among the bushes to rest, when her strength failed. The thought of meeting her husband now, with nobody by, drove her wild. She had lived under the same roof with him for days at Oxford, and thought little of it, being occupied with other matters ; but deadly panic, as of a wild deer flying from the hunter, had seized upon her now. She never asked herself what harm he could do her. She feared nothing actual, but, with overwhelming blind terror, she feared the future and the unknown.

Oh, how many thoughts came^z rushing upon her as she lay crouched together on the cool earth among the bushes !—thoughts half made out, not one altogether articulate—gleams of a consciousness that this was folly, that it was impossible, that she *must* get the better of herself, that the fever in her soul *must* be chased away, and could not be submitted to. “I must change—I must make a change !” she moaned to herself. A whole new being, a new creature, with dim evolutions

of reason, dim perceptions of the impossible, seemed to be rising up in her, blotting out the old. Her faults, her follies, her wild impulses, the savage nature which could endure no restraint, had all come to a climax in her ; and reason, which had struggled faintly in the old days, and won her to so many sacrifices, had at last got the balance in hand, I think, and the power to decide what could and what could not be. Yet, when she had got her breath a little, she stumbled to her feet, and went on.

When Dick came back she was not to be found in her rooms, which troubled him greatly ; for she had never before gone out by herself. He searched through every corner, then went to the other parts of the house—to the drawing-room, to Lady Eskside’s rooms, to Val’s—hopeless of finding her, indeed, yet so confident that something must have happened, that no marvel would have surprised him. When he burst into the library he was in despair. And this new alarm, so suddenly introduced among them, diverted them at once from the other subject, which had lost its enthralling and exciting power now that the secret had been made known. Richard Ross had not been spending a pleasant afternoon. He was excited by Val’s defiance, and he had been excited before. He turned very pale as Dick spoke. He knew that his wife had fled out of the house to avoid him—a thing which, naturally enough, had tried his temper greatly. Where had she gone ? He remembered that when he looked down the winding staircase in the turret, through which she had evidently fled, the fresh air blowing in his face had brought with it a sound of the Esk tumbling over its rocks. This had not alarmed him then, and he had scorned to follow the fugitive, or to force her into an

interview she avoided, in this way; but now suddenly it returned to him with an indescribable shock of terror. He went out without saying a word to any one, moved by sudden panic. The others started to explore the woods; the idea of the river did not occur to either of the young men, who knew her better than Richard did. They set off both together; while Lord Esk-side, with the servants, undertook to search the gardens and shrubberies nearer home. "Oh, God forgive her if she's gone away again!" cried the old lady, wringing her hands. "I can't think that she's gone away," said Dick. His face was very grave. He scarcely said a word to Val, who went with him, and who tried anxiously to ascertain from him what it was he really feared. Dick kept silent, his heart too strained and sore for speech.

As for Val, he was swept out of one excitement and plunged into another without a moment's interval to take breath in, and the fresh air did him good. I need not say of a public-school boy and well-trained "man," that he had picked himself up, to use an undignified but useful expression, ere now, and betrayed, neither in look nor tone, the sudden blow he had received. For that grace, if no other, let our English education be blessed. Val had no idea of contending, of "making a row," or of bearing malice. If the right was Dick's, why, then, the right was Dick's,—and there was nothing more to be said. If his mind was momentarily weak and unable to seize all that was going on, he did not show it, except by a certain mental feebleness and want of his usual energy, which made him disposed to take Dick's lead rather than to form any opinion of his own. But even this lasted only a short time. "Come," said Val, drawing a long

breath, "why should we be so downhearted? She has gone out to take the air—to enjoy the—good weather."

He had meant to say the beautiful afternoon; but then it suddenly occurred to him that the day was dull and cloudy, and that the gleams of sunshine which had been so sweet were gone.

"She never took her walk without me before," said Dick. "Oh, why did I stop away so long? I can't tell you what a weight I have here at my heart."

"Cheer up, old fellow!" said Val, thrusting his arm into his brother's; "things will go better than you think. What harm could happen? She was not ill; and the woods are innocent woods, with no precipices in them, or pitfalls. I roamed about them all day long when I was a child, and nothing ever happened to me."

Dick shook his head; but he was cheered in spite of himself, and began to have a little hope. The woods were alive with sound on that dim afternoon. The sun, indeed, was not shining, but the atmosphere was soft with spring, and all the light airs that were about came and rustled in the leaves, and tossed the light twigs which could not resist them. The birds were twittering on every branch, scarcely singing, for they missed the sun, but getting through all that melodious dramatic chatter which they do ordinarily in the early morning, before their professional life, so to speak, as minstrels of the universe, has begun. Everything was soft, harmonious, subdued—no high notes, either of colour or sound, but every tone gentle, low, and sweet. Even Esk added with a mellow note his voice to the concert. It seemed impossible to conceive of anything terrible, any grief that rends the heart, any failure of light and life,

upon such a subdued and gentle day. The young men went far,—much further, alas! than they needed to have gone—almost as far as the linn,—before Dick remembered that it was impossible she could have walked to that distance. “I am thinking of her as she was in the old times,” said Dick, “when she would get over a long bit of road, always so quiet, not one to talk much, looking as if she saw to the end, however far it was; but she couldn’t do that now. Now I think of it,” said Dick, “she’s failed these last days.”

“I do not think it, Dick. Your fears make you see the gloomy side of everything.”

“It ain’t my fears; it’s somehow borne in upon me. Please God,” said Dick, devoutly, “that we find her, she shan’t be left to herself again without being looked after. No, no one is to blame—except me that should have known.”

“Do you think it has harmed her to bring her here?” Val spoke humbly, with a sudden sense of some failure on his own part of duty towards her; for indeed he had taken his mother’s strange ways for granted, as children so often do.

“It couldn’t be helped, anyhow,” said Dick—“she had to come;” and then he paused and thought all at once of the bank of primroses, which was a mile at least nearer home than they were now. He put his hand on Val’s arm, and turned back. “I have thought of a place to look for her,” he cried.

The spot was deep in the silence of the woods, great trees standing round about, one a huge old beech, every branch of which looked like a tree in itself. Underneath it, in a curious circle, were a ring of juniper-bushes, deep funereal green, contrasting with the lighter silken foliage above. Close to this rose the low knoll, a deeper cool green than either, all

carpeted with the primrose-leaves. Something red lying there showed a long way before they reached the knoll, through the trees; but it was not till they were quite close to it that they saw her whom they sought. She was lying in a natural easy attitude reclined on the green bank. With one hand she seemed to be groping for something among the leaves, and it was only when they were within sight that she dropped back as if in fatigue, letting her head droop upon the rich herbage. “Mother!” Dick cried; but she did not move. Her consciousness was gone, or going. How long she had been there no one ever knew. Her strength had failed entirely when she had sat down among the flowers, after struggling through the bushes as on a pilgrimage to that natural shrine which had caught her sick fancy. She had a few of the primroses in her lap, and one or two in her hand. The very last, one large starlike flower just out of her reach, was the only other that remained, and she had fallen as if in an overstrain, trying to reach this. Her face was perfectly pallid, like white marble, contrasting with the brilliant colour of her shawl, as she lay back among the leaves. Her eyes were open, and seemed to be looking at the boys as they approached; but there was no intelligence or consciousness in them. Her lips were parted with a long-drawn struggling breath.

“Mother!” Dick cried, kneeling down by her side. She stirred faintly, and tried to turn towards the voice. “Mother, mother!” he repeated passionately; “you’re tired only? not ill, not ill, mother dear?”

Once more she made a feeble effort to turn to him. “Ay, Dick,” she said, “ay, lad—that’s—what it is. I’m tired—dead tired; I don’t know—how I am to get afoot—again.”

"Don't lose heart," he cried, poor fellow—though every look he gave her took all heart from him—"there's two of us here to help you, mother, Val and me. Try to rouse up once more, for Val's sake, if not for mine."

She made no answer to this appeal; perhaps she was past understanding it; her fingers fumbled feebly with the primroses; "I came out—for some flowers," she said,— "but I didn't bring—no basket; ay, lad—it is a long way—and it's dark. Is there a tent—Dick? or where are we—to sleep to-night?"

"Mother, mother dear—home is close by—for God's sake come home!"

"That—I will!" she said, her voice low and dull and broken, contrasting strangely with the apparent heartiness of the words. Then she raised her head feebly for a moment, and looked at them with her eyes expanding in great circles of light—light which was darkness; and then dropped back again heavily, upon the green primrose-leaves.

"Has she fainted?" said Valentine, in terror.

"Go and fetch some one!" cried Dick, imperiously commanding his brother for the first time—"something to carry her home." He was master of the moment, in his sudden perception, and in the grief which he only could fully feel. He did not say what had happened, but he knew it to the depths of his heart. She had not fainted. She had got away where this time no one could follow her, or bring her back any more.

Val rushed through the trees to the broad footpath, to obey his brother's orders, dismayed and anxious, but with no suspicion of what had really taken place; and there met a pony-carriage which Lady Eskside had sent after them, judging that if the poor wanderer were

found, she might be too weary to walk back. Val returned immediately to where his mother lay, hoping, with a strange nervous dread which he could not account for, that she might have changed her position, and closed her eyes; for there was something that appalled him, he could not tell why, in the brilliancy of that look, which did not seem to direct itself to anything, not even to her sons. Dick raised her with difficulty in his arms, showing his brother without a word how to help him. And thus they made their way painfully through the brushwood. How heavy, how still, how motionless, how awful was their burden! Val's heart began to beat as hers had done so short a time before. Was this how people looked when they fainted? Before they reached the pony-carriage he was exhausted with the strain, which was both physical and mental. He was afraid of her, not knowing what had happened to her. "Should not we get water—something to revive her?" he said, panting, as she was laid down in the little carriage. Dick only shook his head. "Lead the pony very gently," he said to his brother; and Val once more did what he was told—humbly sending the servant who had brought it, on before them, to announce their coming, and to get the doctor. And thus her boys, all alone, no one with them, brought her home. It was what she would have chosen, poor soul! had she been able to choose.

I need not describe the commotion and excitement in Rossraig when this piteous procession came to the door. Dick supporting her who needed no support; Val, with subdued looks, leading the pony. They carried her up-stairs into her own room between them, letting no one else touch her; and I think that, by that time, Val knew, as well as Dick. But of course all kind of

vain attempts were made to bring her to herself, till the doctor came, who looked at her, and then sent all the foolish ministrations away. Richard Ross, coming in very white and worn from the river-side, where he had found nothing, met Mrs Harding coming down-stairs with solemn looks, but did not stop to question her. He went straight up into the rooms where up to this time there had existed a kind of moral barricade against him which he had seldom ventured to face. All was open now to him or any one. He could go where he pleased, penetrating into the very chamber a little while ago more closely shut against him than any Holy of Holies, where his wife lay. They had pulled away, for the sake of air, all the curtains and draperies which a few hours before had stifled her very soul ; and there she lay, unveiled as yet, a marble woman, white and grand, with everything gone that detracted from her beauty. Her eyes were half closed, revealing still a glimmer under the long eyelashes, which had never showed as they did now, against the marble whiteness of her cheek. The kerchief on her head had fallen off, and the long dark hair framed the white face. The living woman had been beautiful with a beauty that was passing—the dead woman was sublime in a beauty that would last, in

the eyes that saw her now, for ever. Richard thrust the doctor out of his way, who turned to speak to him. He put Val away with the other hand, and went up close to the bedside. What thoughts passed through his mind as he stood there ! Sorrow, a certain indignation, a profound and mournful pity. It was she who had wronged him, not he who had wronged her ; and there she lay, for whom he had lost his life, and who had never been his. His cold bosom swelled with an emotion greater than he knew how to account for. She was so beautiful that he was proud of her even at this last moment, and felt his choice justified ; but she had got away for ever without one sign, without one word, to show that she had ever thought of him. He had given up everything for her, and she had never been his.

"Richard, Richard, come away," said his mother, laying her hand on his arm ; "we can do her no good now ; and she had her boys with her, thank God, at the last."

"Her boys !" he said, with a deep breath which was tremulous with injured love, with wounded pride, with unspeakable minglings of indignant sorrow. "I am her husband, mother, and she has gone without one word to me."

Then he turned, and, without looking at any one, went away.

CHAPTER XLIII.

I do not mean to pretend to the reader that, after that one moment of complicated anguish, swelling of the heart almost too great for a man's bosom who was too proud to show any sign, Richard sorrowed long or deeply for his wife, or that this strange blow was profoundly felt as a grief by the awed and saddened household. That was scarcely possible : though the sor-

rowful pity for a life thus wasted, and which had caused the waste of another, was more deep and less unmingled in the minds of the old people after the death of Richard's wife than it could be while she was living, and proving still how impossible it was by any amount of kindness to bring her to share their existence. Neither could Val grieve as Dick did. He grieved with his

imagination, seeing all the sadness of this catastrophe, and touched with tender compunctions, and thoughts of what he might have done but did not, as every sensitive soul must be when the gate of death has closed between it and those who have claims upon its affection. He was very, very sorry for poor Dick, whose grief was real and profound; and deeply touched by the memory of his mother whom he had known so little. But what more could he feel? and soon life took its usual course again. The house was saddened and stilled in its mourning—but it was relieved also. "She never could have been happy here; and where, poor soul, would she have been happy?" Lady Eskside said, dropping a natural tribute of tears to her memory. It was sad beyond measure, but yet it was a relief as well.

Very soon, too, after this, it became necessary for Val to go to London, and for the whole system of the family affairs to be rearranged. Dick had not taken the slightest notice of the revelation which he had heard that day at the library door, if, indeed, he had heard it at all. A day or two, however, before the time fixed for Val's departure, he appeared in the library, where once more his grandparents were seated together, leading his brother with him. It was about a month after the mother's death, getting towards the end of June; and the windows were all open. Lady Eskside had come in from the lawn where she had been walking, with a white shawl over her cap (the old lady disliked black—but white is always suitable with mourning, as well as very becoming to a fair old face, soft with pearly tints of age, yet sweet with unfading bloom); on a garden-seat within sight Richard sat reading, looking out now and then from his book on the lovely familiar landscape. The

old lord, I need not say, was seated at his writing-table, with the last number of the 'Agricultural Journal' near him, and a letter, just begun, on his desk, to the editor, in which he was about to give very weighty advice to the farming world on the rotation of crops. Thus, when the two young men came in, the whole family was within reach, all stilled and quieted, as a family generally is after a domestic loss, even when there is no profound grief. Dick was the most serious of all. There was that expression about his eyes which tears leave behind, and which sad thoughts leave—a look that comes naturally to any mourner who has strained his eyes gazing after some one who is gone. Val was the only exception to the generally subdued look of the party. He was excited; two red spots were on his cheeks, his eyes were shining with animation and energy; he went to the window, said a few half-whispered words to Lady Eskside, then beckoned to his father, who came slowly in and joined them. Dick sat listlessly down near the old lady. He was the only one who seemed indifferent to what was coming, and indeed suspected nothing of any special importance in this family meeting.

"Grandfather," said Val, "I have something to say. I am going away soon, you know, and I should like everything to be settled first. There have been so many changes lately, some of them sad enough," and he laid his hand caressingly on Dick's shoulder, by whom he stood. "We can't get back what has gone from us," said Val, his eyes glistening, "or make up for anything that might have been done differently; but at least we must settle everything now." Then there was a little pause, and he added with a smile half frank, half embarrassed, "It seems very worldly-minded, but I

should like to know what I am to have and how things are to be."

"It is very reasonable," said Lord Eskside.

"First of all," said Val, "I want to keep my seat now I've got it. I don't grudge anything to Dick—it isn't that; but as there was a great deal of trouble in getting it, and expense—no, I don't mean to be a humbug; that isn't the reason. There's nothing to prevent the younger son being member for Eskshire, is there, sir? and I want it—that's the short and long of the matter—unless you say no."

"He ought to have the seat," said Richard. "It is a little compensation for the disappointment; besides, Val is better qualified——"

"And again," said Val, hurriedly, to prevent the completion of this sentence, "I want to know, sir, and Dick ought to know——"

Dick interrupted him, raising his head, "What is this about?" he asked; "has it anything to do with me?"

"It has everything to do with you," said his father. "He knows, does not he? Dick, I was told you were present and heard what I said—which perhaps was foolishly said at that moment. We had always thought your brother was the eldest and you the youngest. Now it turns out the other way. You are the eldest son. Of course this changes Valentine's prospects entirely; and it is well that you, too, should look your new position in the face as my father's heir."

"I!—Lord Eskside's heir?" said Dick, rising to his feet, not startled or wondering, but with a smile. "No, no, you are mistaken; that is not what you mean."

"Unfortunately there is no possibility of being mistaken," said Richard. "Yes, Val, it is unfortunate; for you have been brought up to it and he has not. But, my boy," he said, turning to Dick

kindly, though it was with an effort, "we none of us grudge it to you; you have behaved in every way so well, and so like a gentleman."

"Perfectly well—as if I had trained him myself," said my lady, drying her eyes, "notwithstanding that we feel the disappointment to Val." The old lord did not say anything, but he watched Dick very closely from under his shaggy brows.

Dick looked round upon them for a moment, quiet and smiling softly as if to himself at some private subject of amusement. Then he looked at Lady Eskside. "Do you believe it too, *you*, my lady?" he said in an undertone, with a half reproach. After this, turning to the others again, his aspect changed. He grew red with rising excitement, and addressed them as if from some platform raised higher than they were. "I am a very simple lad," he said; "I don't know how your minds work, you that are gentlemen. In my class it would be as plain as daylight—at least I think so, unless I'm wrong. What do you mean, in the name of heaven, you that are gentlemen? Me to come in and take Val's name and place and fortune! me, Forest Myra's son—Dick Brown!—that he took off the road and made a man of when we were both boys. What have I done that you should name such a thing to me?"

The men all looked at him, abashed and wondering. Lady Eskside alone spoke. "Oh, Dick, my boy!" she said, holding out her hand to him, "that was what I said; that was what I knew you would say."

"And that is just what must not be said," said the old lord, rising from his seat. "My man, you speak like a man; and don't think you are not understood. But it cannot be. There are three generations of us here together. A

hardship is a hardship, meant to be endured; and I would not say but to bear it well was as great an honour to the family as to win a battle. We are three generations here, Dick, and we can't put the house in jeopardy, or trust its weal to a hasty generosity, that your son, if not you, would repent of. No, no. God bless you, my man! you are the eldest, and everything will be yours."

This time Dick laughed aloud. "When two noes meet," he said, "one must give in, sir. I'll not give in. I say it to your face; and yours, sir; and yours, Val. You may speak till Doomsday, but I'll not give in; not if the world was to come to an end for it. Look here: I am *her* son, as well as Val. I can go further off, more out of your reach, than ever she did—God bless her! And I'm a man, and you can't stop me. If there's another word about me taking Val's place, (a farce! as if I ever would do it!) that day I'll go!—that moment I'll go! and, do what you please, you can't bring *me* back. But I don't want to go," Dick said, after a pause, in a softened voice; "I ain't one to wander; I'm fond of a home. What I'd like would be to stay quiet, and stand by the old folks, and be of some use to Val. Father and Grandfather! I've never made bold to call you so before; don't drive me away! Val, speak for me! for God's sake, don't make a Cain of me—an outcast—a tramp!"

"It is not in your nature," said Richard, with a smile.

"You don't know what's in my nature. You didn't know what was in *her* nature," said Dick, with sudden passion. "I'll not do this, so help me God!" He snatched up Lady Eskside's big Bible with the large print, from the table, and kissed it, tremulous with excitement. Then, putting it reverently

down again, went and threw himself at the feet of the old lady. "Put your hand on my head," said Dick, softly, "my lady, as she used to do."

"I will—I will, my dear!" said Lady Eskside.

And to be sure this was not how it ended. All the more for their wish that it should be so, the family, in its three generations, struggled against Dick's persistence, calling in external testimony—as that of Willie Maitland—to prove how impossible any such arrangement was. Dick never allowed himself to be excited again; but he held by his vow, and nothing that could be said moved him. Sometimes he would get up in the midst of a discussion, and go away, crying out impatiently that they were tiring him to death,—the only time he was disrespectful in word or look to the elders of the party. Sometimes he bore it all, smiling; sometimes he threatened to go away. I think it was by the interposition of Sandy Pringle's good sense that it was settled at last—Sandy Pringle the younger, a very rising young lawyer, much thought of in the Parliament House. Val had sought Sandy out almost as anxiously as he sought Violet, to beg his pardon for that unadvised blow, and to secure his interest (for is not a friend, once alienated, then recovered, twice a friend?) with his parents. Sandy was the first of the Pringle family reintroduced after the quarrel to Rossraig. He took Dick's side energetically and at once, with that entire contempt for the law which I believe only great lawyers venture to entertain. I don't pretend to understand how he managed it, or how far the bargain which was ultimately made was justifiable, or whether it would stand for a moment if any one contested it. Such arrangements do exist, they say, in many great families, and Sandy had

a whole list of them at his fingers' ends, with which he silenced Lord Eskside. One enormous point in his favour was that Valentine, being already known and acknowledged as Lord Eskside's eldest grandson and heir, active measures would have been necessary on Dick's part to establish his own claims—measures which Dick not only would not take, but refused all sanction to. And howsoever it was brought about, this I know, that Val is the eldest son and Dick the youngest, *de facto*, if not *de jure*, to the absolute contentment of everybody concerned ; and that this secret, like every other honest secret, is known to a dozen people at least, and up to this time has done nobody any harm.

And I will not attempt to linger at this advanced period of my story, or to tell all the means by which the Pringles, on one side, and the Rosses on the other, were brought to consent to that unalterable decision of the young people, which both Val and Vi believed themselves to have held to with resolution heroic through trials unparalleled. Reflect with yourself, kind reader, how long, if you have an only daughter, your middle-aged sternness could hold out against the tears in her sweet eyes?—reflect how long you could stand out against your boy—the fine fellow—who is your pride and glory? There are stern parents, I suppose, in the world, but I fully confess they are beings as much beyond my comprehension as megatheriums. If the young people hold out, tenderly and dutifully as becomes them, the old people must give in. Is it not a law of nature? I do not advise you, boys and girls, to flout and defy us all the same ; for that brings into action a totally different order of feelings,—a different set of muscles, so to speak, producing quite different results. But as my boy

and girl, in the present case, heartily loved their fathers and mothers, and were incapable of disrespect towards them, the natural consequence came about in time, as how should it not? Lord and Lady Eskside and Mr and Mrs Pringle, and even the Honourable Richard Ross, in Florence, gave in accordingly, and consented at last. This process occupied the time until the beginning of the next summer from these events ; and then, on the first day in June (not May, the virgin month, which is, as everybody in Scotland knows, fatally unlucky for marriages) Valentine and Violet were made one, and all their troubles (they thought, like a pair of babies) came to an end. The wedding feast, out of consideration for the old people, was held at Rosscraig ; but I will tell the reader of only one incident which occurred at that feast, or after it, and which has no particular connection either with the bridegroom or the bride.

Richard Ross had come from Florence to be present at his son's marriage ; and there, too, was Miss Percival, who had been much longer absent from her old friend than was usual, the episode of Richard's wife having interposed a visionary obstacle between them which neither could easily break. At this genial moment, however, Mary forgot herself, and returned to all her old habits in the familiar house. It was she and Dick—who immediately fell in love with each other—who arranged everything, and made the wedding party so completely successful. After the bridal pair had gone, when the guests were dispersing, and Mary's cares over, she came out on the terrace before the windows to breathe the fresh air, and have a moment's quiet. Here Richard joined her after a while. Richard Ross was fifty, but his appearance was exactly what it had been ten years before, and I am

not sure that he was not handsomer then than at five-and-twenty. Mary was a few years younger—a pretty woman of her age—with hair inclining towards grey, and eyes as bright as they had ever been. I do not think it failed to strike either of them with a curious thrill of half sympathy, half pain, that they two might have been—nay, almost, ought to have been—the father and mother, taking a conjugal stroll in the quiet, after their son had departed in his youthful triumph, feeling half sad, half glad that his time had begun and theirs was over—yet so far from really feeling their day to be over, that the sadness was whimsical, and amused them. I think they both felt this, more or less, and that Mary's secret grudge at having been, as it were, cheated out of the mothering of Val, had been strong in her mind all day. They looked together over the lovely woods, all soft with the warmth of June, down to where the Esk, never too quiet, played like a big baby with the giant boulder which lay mid-stream, just as he turned round the corner of the hill. The two figures on the terrace were in shade, but all the landscape was shining in the June sunshine. It was a moment to touch the heart.

"You and I have looked at these woods often together, Mary, in many different circumstances," said Richard, with a touch of sentiment in his voice.

"Yes, indeed—often enough," she said, compelling herself to laugh.

"And now here have the young ones set out, and we remain. I often wonder if you and I had come together a quarter of a century ago, as seemed so natural—as I suppose everybody wished——"

"Except ourselves," said Mary, her heart fluttering, but putting forth all her most strenuous powers of self-command.

"Except—ourselves? Well, one never knows exactly what one did wish at that time," said Richard; "everything that was least good, I suppose. We are very reasonable at our present age, Mary; and I think we suit each other. Suppose you have me, now?"

"Suppose—what?" she asked, with surprise.

"I think we suit each other; and my mother would be more pleased than words can tell. Suppose you have me, now?"

He held out his hand to her, standing still; and she turned and looked at him steadily, gravely, the flutter utterly stilled in her heart.

"No, Richard, thank you," she said. "It is too late for that sort of thing now."

He shrugged his shoulders as he looked at her. "Well—if you think so," he said; and they walked together once more to the end of the terrace. I suppose he could have gone on quite steadily, as if nothing had happened; but Mary was not capable of this. When they turned again, she broke away from him, saying something incoherent about my lady calling her—which was not the case, of course. Mary found it unpleasant to be near him all day after this; and in the languor of the waning afternoon, when all the guests were gone, she escaped to the woods, where Dick followed her, anxious too to escape from his own thoughts. But yet what kind thoughts these were!—what an exquisite, gentle melancholy it was that moved poor Dick, infinitely sad, yet sweeter than being happy! He had a feeling for Violet which he had never had for any woman—which he believed he never would have again for any woman—and she was his brother's wife, God bless her! Dick was right in that last thought. He would never think of any other again as he had thought of Vi; but for all that his wound was not a

deadly wound, and his love was of the imagination rather than the heart. He did not mean to tell Miss Percival about it in so many words ; but she was an understanding woman, and could make a great deal out of a very little. She read him as clearly as if she had seen into his heart. And so, I think, she did ; and Dick's heart was so soft that a great deal came out of it which he had never known to be there. Once only she startled him greatly by an abrupt exclamation. In the very midst of something he was saying she broke out, interrupting him, in words of which he could not tell what they meant, or to whom they referred.

"This is the one I used to think I knew!" cried Mary to herself. "I was not deceived, only too early for him. This is the one I knew!"

Was she going out of her wits, the kind woman? But years after Dick had a glimmering of understanding as to what she meant.

Before Richard went away he told his mother what had happened. He was too much a man of the world to believe for a moment that such a secret could be kept or that Mary would not tell ; and it was one of his principles, when anything unpleasant could be said about you, to take care to say it yourself. Just before he bade her good-bye, he told Lady Eskside : "Don't say I never try to please you, mother," he said ; "I asked Mary to have me on Val's wedding day——"

"Richard ! Lord bless us ! and Mary said——"

"No, thank you," said Richard, with a laugh ; and kissed his mother, and went away.

Lady Eskside, very full of this strange intimation, walked down the avenue to meet the old lord on

his return from the station whither he had accompanied his son. She took his arm and they walked up together. "The train was in time, for a wonder, and he's off, Catherine," said the old lord. "So now you and me must settle down, as it's all over ; and be thankful we have Dick to 'stand by the old folks,' as he says."

"Yes," said my lady a little *distracte* ; "but I've something to tell you. Richard asked Mary before he went away——"

"Asked Mary? What? And she told you, my lady? She should not have told you ; unless she consented, and I doubt that," said the old lord.

"He told me, and she refused him. She was not blate to refuse my Richard. Should I say anything about it?" asked my lady, leaning heavily on her old lord's arm, for the path was steep and tried them both.

Lord Eskside laughed, his eyes twinkling under his eyebrows. "They're quits now, or more," he said ; "and I would not say but something might come of it yet."

The avenue was very steep ; it tried them both as they went up slowly leaning on each other. When they stopped to take breath, they both spoke, the same thought coming to their minds at the same moment. "The house will be dull without Val," Lady Eskside said with a sigh. "When the bairns are gone, the house grows quiet," said her husband. Then they set forth again and climbed the last turn to their own door, holding each other up with kind mutual pressure of their old arms. Both of them were beyond the measure of man's years on earth. "The bairns come and the bairns go—but, thank God, you and me are still together, Catherine," said the old lord.

THE ABODE OF SNOW.

SHIGRI AND ITS GLACIERS.—THE ALPS AND HIMALIYA.

THE valley of Spiti is secluded in such a very formidable manner from the civilised world that it has very few European visitors; and though it has frequently been conquered, yet it is difficult to conceive of its being so, or of any one finding it worth while to conquer it. This province is situated in the centre of the Himáliya, with two great snowy ranges (not to speak of minor ones) between it and the plains of India. There are very few parts in Spiti where we can get below 12,000 feet, while it contains innumerable points which are 20,000 feet high, and its great valley has an average elevation of about 12,800 feet. Elevated and secluded though this province be, it is not to be compared in these admirable respects with Zanskar; but it is tolerably well raised out of the world. On the east, access can be had to it by the 18,000-foot Mancung Pass, or the difficult To-tzo route. From the south, the only entrance is by the desolate Babel Pass, which is 15,000 feet high, and closed great part of the year. To the west, the direction which I am about to pursue, there are no means of exit or access except over glaciers and an utterly desolate region, which requires days in order to traverse it. To the north there are a few passes like the Parang-la (18,000 feet), which take towards Ladák; but nobody need go to Ladák in search of civilisation. I did see one solitary apricot-tree at Lari, and some fine willow-trees at Po; but that about exhausts my arboreal recollections of Spiti, or Pítí, as the people of the country more usually call it. There are a good many willow, birch, and

thorn bushes; but still there must be a great scarcity of fuel. Notwithstanding that it is about seventy miles long, with a breadth of fifty miles in its upper portion, its population amounts to only about 2300 persons, whose language is Tibetan, and whose appearance has some Tartar characteristics. The minstrels, to whom I have already alluded, do not hold land, and are called Bedas. Captain Harcourt says: "Many of the men resemble veritable Calmucks; and with few exceptions fall, as do the women, very far below the European standard of beauty; indeed, for positive hideousness of countenance, the people of Spiti are perhaps pre-eminent in the British empire." For absolute hideousness, so great as to be almost beauty of a kind, I should back a Spiti old woman against the whole human race; and the production of one in Europe, with her extraordinary ornaments, could scarcely fail to create a great sensation. The dress of both sexes may be described as tunics and trousers of thick woollen stuff, with large boots, partly of leather, partly of blanket, which come up to the knee, and which they are not fond of taking off at any time. In order to obtain greater warmth they often put a quantity of flour into these boots, beside their legs, which I fancy is a practice peculiar to Spiti, but might be introduced elsewhere. The ornaments are very much the same as those of the Chinese Tartars, except that the women have sometimes nose-rings, which adds to their peculiar fascination. Not being affected by caste ideas, as even the Lamaists of Kunáwar are,

the people of Spiti make no objections to a European eating with them or entering their houses, unless they happen to be rather ashamed of the interior; but the houses differ very little from those of Zanskar, one of which I shall describe in detail, having had to spend two days in it during a great snowstorm. There is very little rainfall in Spiti; from November to April all the streams are frozen up, and it is rather a mystery to me how the people obtain sufficient fuel to support life during that long severe period. In summer the fields are watered by artificial channels leading from the mountain torrents; and it has often a very lively effect when the waters are let loose around and over a number of fields. The chief crops are wheat, barley, and peas, the latter affording a valuable addition to the traveller's food, but not so readily purchasable as the grain. One need not look for sugar, fruit, or any other of the luxuries of life, in this exceedingly sterile province. Yaks there are in abundance, along with zo-pos and the common Indian ox; and the *ghints*, or small ponies, are famous for their sure-footedness, their sagacity, and their power of carrying their rider safely up and down the most terrible, dangerous, and fatiguing paths. Horseracing, of a very irregular sort, is indulged in occasionally; and the blacksmiths of Spiti are famous in High Asia for their manufacture of steel bits and stirrups. The great substitute for paper here, as in all these snow-lands, is the inner bark of the birch-tree, which is of a light yellow colour, and very soft, though of a close texture. It is very good for all wrapping purposes, and could be used for writing on if needed. The people are singularly exempt from disease, being, to all appearance, afflicted only by a few not bad cases of skin disease, which can

easily be accounted for by their persistent avoidance of washing. Spiti is Búdhistic; and there are nearly 400 Lamas in the province, most of whom are bound to celibacy, and only about a dozen nuns,—though that must be quite enough, if it be true, as Captain Harcourt, lately the Assistant Commissioner for the three British provinces of Kúlú, Lahaul, and Spiti, alleges, that “there are at times scenes of gross debauchery in the monasteries—a state of things which can be believed when Lamas and nuns are living promiscuously together.” As polyandry exists in the province, the surplus women have to remain in the houses of their parents or other relatives; but there is no reason to consider the Spiti people as immoral, though they indulge in heavy drinking on special occasions; and, like most mountaineers, they are exceedingly enamoured of their own lofty country, treeless and sterile though it be, and are extremely unwilling to go down any of the passes which lead to more genial climes. The poverty of this province, however, has not saved it from more than one conquest. Nearly a thousand years ago, it was under the Lassa Government; and two centuries after, it fell under the dominion of Kublai Khan. In more recent times, it was sometimes subject to the Chinese Tartars and sometimes to the chiefs of Baltistan or of Ladák, according to which party happened to have the upper hand in the neighbourhood. It came into our possession about thirty years ago, through an arrangement with the Maharajah of Kashmir, into whose power it had fallen, and was conjoined with Kúlú under an Assistant Commissioner in 1849.

Dankar, the capital of Spiti, should properly be spelled “Dran-khar,” which means “The cold

fort." *Khar*, with an aspirate, signifies a fort, as *Dan-kar* is, or rather was; but *kar* means white. Hence it has been a decided error to call this place Dankar; but I shall leave the correction of it to Dr W. W. Hunter and his department, for though Spiti does not boast of a post-office, yet it is a British province. The precise height of this village is 12,776 feet, so it may easily be conceived that the nights were intensely cold in our light tents, and that there was some little difficulty in rousing my people in the morning. From Dankar, or rather from Kazeh or Kaja, a day's journey beyond, my course was a novel one, almost unknown to Himályan tourists. When considering, at Simla, how I should best see the Himáliya and keep out of the reach of the Indian monsoon, I had the advantage of an old edition of Montgomerie's map, in which the mountains and rivers are laid in, but which is now out of print; and I saw from it that the lie of the Himáliya to the north-west presented a series of rivers and elevated valleys, in the very centre of the ranges, which would enable me to proceed to Kashmir by almost a new route, and one of great interest. I could get no information about this route, further than was conveyed by the admission of a Panjābi captain, who had been in the Himáliya, and who said on my consulting him on the subject—"Well, I should think it would be very possible." It certainly proved to be so, seeing that I got over the ground, and I got some information regarding it from the Moravian missionaries.

What I had to do was to follow up the Lee or Spiti river almost to its source, then to cross the Kanzam Pass into the frightfully desolate Shigri valley, or valley of the Chandra river; to follow down that river

to its junction with the Bhaga; to follow up the Bhaga for a few marches, and then to cross over the tremendous Shinkal Pass on to the Tsarap Lingti river, and the valleys through which streams flow into the upper Indus. It is the first portion of this journey that I have now to speak of; and to render it intelligible, it is only necessary for the reader to follow up the Spiti river as far as he can get, to cross the mountains at its source, and then to descend the Chandra river to its junction with the Bhaga.

At Kazeh, a day's journey from Dankar, I left the usual track, which goes over the Parang-la Pass to Changehemmo and Leh, and which involves a journey that is on many grounds objectionable. Here I had the choice of two routes, one on the left and one on the right bank of the Lee, but chose the latter; and as the former was within sight great part of the way, I had the opportunity of observing that it was considerably the worst of the two, though an inexperienced traveller might rashly conclude that nothing could be worse than the one I followed. To Kazeh we kept up the left bank of the Lee, which was no longer sunk in deep gorges, but had a broad open valley, and spreads itself here and there amid a waste of white stones. Here I crossed the river, at a point where the banks drew close together, and on what, by courtesy, might be called a wooden bridge. This *sangpa* is very high and shaky, and the central portion of it is composed of three logs, without any parapet, and with loose branches laid across it, which are awkward and dangerous to step upon. Stopping for breakfast at the village of Kharig, I saw the large Lama monastery of Kí on the other side of the river, perched on the top of a hill in a very extraordinary manner. This monastery, according to Csoma

de Körös, was established in the eleventh century of the Christian era by a pupil of the well-known Atisha. It is a celebrated place; but (whether or not it contains any portion of the dozen Spiti nuns) its monks do not seem to exercise much civilising influence in their own neighbourhood, for the people of Kharig were much more like thorough savages than the residents of any other Himáliyan village which I entered. It being rather a hot day, the children, and even boys and girls of ten and twelve years old, were entirely naked; and the number of children was far beyond the usual proportion to that of households. Morang, where we camped, is a small village even for these mountains, and is about 13,000 feet high; but it had an intelligent and exceedingly obliging *mukea*—the functionary who provides for the wants of travellers—who had been educated by the Moravian brethren in Lahaul, and spoke Hindústhani. There was a wonderful view from this place both up and down the great valley of the Spiti river, bounded downwards by the Rupa-khago, or the snowy mountains of the Manerung Pass, and upwards by a grand 20,000-foot peak, supporting an enormous bed of *névé*. Both on this day's journey and on the next, the banks of the river and the mountains above them presented the most extraordinary castellated forms. In many parts the bed of the Lee was hundreds of yards broad, and was composed of white shingle, great part of which was uncovered by water. The steep banks above this white bed had been cut by the action of the elements, so that a series of small fortresses, temples, and spires seemed to stand out from them. Above these again, gigantic mural precipices, bastions, towers, castles, citadels, and spires rose up thousands of feet in height,

mocking, in their immensity and grandeur, the puny efforts of human art, and yet presenting almost all the shapes and effects which our architecture has been able to devise; while, yet higher, the domes of pure white snow and glittering spires of ice far surpassed in perfection, as well as in immensity, all the Moslem musjids and minars. It was passing strange to find the inorganic world thus anticipating, on so gigantic a scale, some of the loftiest efforts of human art; and it is far from unlikely that the builders of the Taj and of the Pearl Mosque at Agra only embodied in marble a dream of the snows of the Himáliya or of the Hindú Kúsh.

After leaving Morang we crossed another shaky *sangpa* over the Gyundi river, and another one before reaching Kiotro, where we encamped in a sort of hollow beyond the village. The place seemed shut in on every side; but that did not preserve us from a frightful wind which blew violently all night, and, with the thermometer at 43°, rendered sleep nearly impossible in my tent. There was a good path on the left bank of the Lee, for my next day's journey from Kiotro to Loisar; and the rock-battlements were more wonderful than ever; but just before reaching that latter place, we had to cross to the right bank of the river by means of a very unpleasant *jhúla*, the side ropes of which were so low as to make walking along it painful. In Loisar, instead of using my tent, I occupied a small mud-room which the Government of British India has been good enough to erect for the benefit of travellers: I do not know what the reason may be for this unusual act of generosity. Perhaps it is because Loisar is one of the highest villages in the world, though it is inhabited all the year round, being 13,395 feet above the

level of the sea. Notwithstanding this extreme altitude, it has a good many fields in which various kinds of grain are cultivated, and there is not a little pasture-land in its neighbourhood. The care of a paternal Government had even gone the length of keeping this room clean and free from insects; so it was a pleasant change from my tent, the more so as it began to rain, and rain at 13,395 feet very soon displays a tendency to turn into sleet and snow. A tent is very healthy and delightful up to a certain point; but it hardly affords any higher temperature than that of the external air; and on these great altitudes at night the air cools down so rapidly, and to such an extent, that it may be a source of danger to some people. There is a safeguard, however, in the purity of the Himāliyan air and in our continuously open-air life among the mountains. I have been injured by the unusual severity of the winter this year in England; yet got no harm, but rather positive benefit, from camping on snow for nights together in my thin tent in Zanskar and Súrú, and in much more severe weather than we have had here lately. Still, the paternal Government's mud-palace at Loisar was an agreeable change, and afforded me the luxury of a sounder sleep than I had had for several nights. The Nakowallah, however, did not at all appreciate the advantages of having a solid habitation about him. I should have thought it would have been simple enough even for his tastes; but nothing would satisfy that fleecy dog until he was allowed to lie outside of the door instead of inside, though that latter position exposed him to hostile visits from all the dogs of the village; and there was a ferocious growling kept up all night outside the door, which, however, was

music to me compared with the howling of the wind about my tent, to which I had been exposed for two or three nights previously.

At Loisar I had to arrange for a very hard journey of five days, over a wild stretch of country where there are no villages, no houses, and scarcely any wood, so that supplies of every kind have to be taken for it. In order to get into Lahaul and hit the junction of the Chandra and Bhaga rivers on the cut road which runs from Simla to Leh, two routes are available from Loisar, both involving a stretch of days over a desolate and glacier-covered country. They both pursue the same course for nearly a day's journey, on to the gradual western slope of the Kanzam or Kanzal Pass; but before crossing it one route takes off to the right, up the highest portion of the valley of the Chandra river, until it strikes the cut road to Leh, near the top of the Barra Lacha Pass (16,221 feet), and then descends the Bhaga to the junction of the two rivers, along the cut road and down a valley where there are plenty of villages. This was the road which I wished to follow, because I always preferred keeping as high up as possible; but the people at Loisar, who were to furnish me with coolies, declared against that route, and implored me not to insist upon going by it. There is a very difficult river to be forded, the water of which is so rapid that the *bigarries*, or porters, can only manage to get through by holding one another's hands and forming a long line. When Sir Douglas Forsyth was Commissioner of the Hill States, he passed over this route, losing two of his *bigarries* (women, I think) in this river; and though he compensated their families, this unfortunate event is advanced to this day as a conclusive reason against the Barra Lacha route, and will probably be so ad-

vanced for centuries, if the world lasts as long.

Hence I had to adopt the other route, which proved to be quite elevated and cold enough. It crosses the Kanzam Pass at a height of almost 15,000 feet, and then goes down the Chandra river on its left bank, through what is called by the natives the Shigri valley, until it reaches the cut road to Leh at the foot, and on the north side, of the Rotang Pass, which is 13,000 feet high, and the mountains of which separate Lahaul from the Kúlú valley. Immediately after that point, this route crosses the river to the village of Kokser, and proceeds from thence to the junction of the Chandra and Bhaga, from whence there are various, but all rather difficult, routes leading to Kashmir. The two routes I have mentioned, which meet at the head of the Chandra-Bhaga—or what is almost equivalent to them, these two rivers before their junction—enclose a large extent of great glaciers and immense snowy mountains, with no habitations, and almost inaccessible to human beings. An equally high range runs down the left bank of the Chandra (the route which I followed), throwing out its glaciers down to and almost across the river, so that it may easily be conceived that few portions even of the Himáliya, which are at all accessible, afford such a stretch of desolation and of wild sublimity.

It was necessary for me, on this part of the journey, to take sixteen *bigarries*, nearly half of whom were women, besides an extra yak to carry wood; and for my own use I got a little dark Spiti mare, which looked nothing to speak of, but actually performed marvels. We also took with us a small flock of milch goats, which could pick up subsistence by the way, and one or two live sheep to be made in-

to mutton on the journey. Starting at six on the morning of the 25th August, with the thermometer at 42°, the first part of the journey gave no idea of the desolation which was soon to be encountered. The day was bright and delightful, and the air even purer and more exhilarating than usual, as might be expected above 13,000 feet. A few miles beyond Loisar we came to the end of the Lee or Spiti river, which I had now followed up from its confluence with the Sutlej, through one of the wildest and most singular valleys in the world. Its whole course is 145 miles; but such figures give no idea of the time and immense toil which are required in order to follow it up that short course, in which it has a fall of about 6000 feet. It has an extraordinary end, which has already been described, and also a curious commencement; for it begins, so to speak, at once, in a broad white bed of sand and stones, being there created by the junction of two short and (when I saw them) insignificant streams, of about equal size and length; the Lichú, which comes from the Kanzam Pass, and the Pitú, which has its rise in the 20,000 snowy peak, Kíii. Earlier in the season, however, just after mid-day, when the snows and glaciers are in full melting order, there must be a magnificent body of water in this upper portion of the Lee, raging and foaming along from bank to brae.

Turning south-west, up the Lichú river, we found a beautiful valley, full of small willow-trees and bright green grass, though it could have been very little less than 14,000 feet high. It was the most European-looking valley I saw among the Himáliya before reaching Kashmir; and it was followed by easy grassy slopes, variegated by sunshine and the shade of passing clouds, which slopes led up to the

extreme summit of the Kanzam or Kanzal Pass, a height of 14,937 feet. Here there was a very imposing view in front, of immense glaciers and snowy peaks, over or about 20,000 feet high, which rose up not far from perpendicularly, on the other side of the youthful Chandra river, which raged down, far beneath our feet, in a manner which made it no wonder that the Kokser people were unwilling to encounter its turbid current. These mountains are the L peaks of the Topographical Survey; three of them had some resemblance to the Matterhorn, though with more snow, and they rose abruptly from the Chandra, so as in the pure air to appear almost within a stone's-throw of the place on which we stood. Great overhanging beds of *névé* fed enormous glaciers, which stretched down to the riverlike buttresses of the three nearest peaks. To an unpractised eye, it might have seemed as if the glaciers extended only half-way to the Chandra, because the lower portions of them were not only thickly covered with debris of rock, but in some places this debris bore living grass. This is a striking phenomenon, which occurs on the Himāliyan glaciers; but I shall return to the subject directly, when I get upon the great glaciers of the Shigri valley.

There was a steep descent from the top of the Kanzam Pass to the Chandra river, which we followed down a short way until a camping-ground was found about the height of 14,000 feet, beside a sort of pond formed by a back-flow of a tributary of the Chandra. Looking down the valley immense glaciers were seen flowing down the clefts in the high mural precipices on both sides of the Chandra, and extending from the great beds of snow above, down to, and even

into the river. This was the Abode of Snow, and no mistake; for nothing else but snow, glaciers, and rocks were to be seen, and the great ice-serpents crept over into this dread valley as if they were living monsters. In the local dialect *Shigri* means a glacier; but the word is applied to the upper Chandra valley, so that the Shigri valley may be called, both literally and linguistically, the "Valley of Glaciers." But the collection of glaciers between the Chandra and Bhaga rivers, large though it be, is really insignificant compared to the enormous congeries of them to be found on the southern side of Zanskar. There was no sward here of any description; and I began to realise the force of the Afghan proverb, "When the wood of Jugduluk burns you begin to melt gold." Of this Shigri valley, in which we spent the next four days, it may well be said that—

"Bare is it, without house or track, and
destitute
Of obvious shelter as a shipless sea."

That, however, is by no means the worst of it; and in the course of the afternoon a fierce storm of wind, rain, and snow added to the savagery of the scene. As I had noticed from the top of the pass, some of the clouds of the monsoon seemed to have been forced over the two ranges of lofty mountains between us and the Indian plains; and soon the storm-clouds began to roll grandly among the snowy peaks which rose close above us on every side. That spectacle was glorious; but it was not so pleasant when the clouds suddenly descended upon us, hiding the peaks, and discharging themselves in heavy rain where we were, but in snow a few hundred feet above. There was a storm-wind which came—

"Like Auster whirling to and fro,
His force on Caspian foam to try;
Or Boëas, when he scours the snow
That skims the plains of Thessaly."

The thermometer sank at once to 41°, from about 65°; and during the night it got down to freezing-point within my tent. Before night the clouds lifted, showing new-fallen snow all round us. In the twilight everything looked white, and assumed a ghastly appearance. The pond was white, and so were the stones around it, the foaming river, and the chalky ground on which our tents were pitched. The sides of the mountains were white with pure new-fallen snow; the overhanging glaciers were partly covered with it; the snowy peaks were white, and so were the clouds, faintly illuminated by the setting sun, veiled with white mist. After dark, the clouds cleared away entirely, and, clearly seen in the brilliant starlight,

"Above the spectral glaciers shone"

beneath the icy peaks; while, above all, the hosts of heaven gleamed with exceeding brightness in the high pure air. The long shining cloud of the Milky Way slanted across the white valley; Vega, my star, was past its zenith; and the *Tsaat Rishi*—the seven prophets of the Hindus, or the seven stars of our Great Bear—were sinking behind the mountains.

We had some difficulty in getting off by six next morning, when the thermometer was at 36°, and every one was suffering from the cold. Unfortunately, too, we had to ford several icy-cold streams shortly after leaving camp, for they would have been unfordable further on in the day. There are no bridges on this wild route; and I could not help pitying the poor women who, on this cold morning, had to wade shivering through the streams, with the rapid water dashing up almost

to their waists. Still, on every side there were 20,000-foot snowy peaks and overhanging glaciers, while great beds of snow curled over the tops of the mural precipices. After a few miles the Chandra ceased to run from north to south, and turned so as to flow from east to west; but there was no change in the sublime and terrific character of the scenery. Out of the enormous beds of snow above, whenever there is an opening for them,—

"The glaciers creep
Like snakes that watch their prey; from
their far fountains
Slowly rolling on; there many a precipice,
Frost, and the sun, in scorn of mortal
power,
Have piled—dome, pyramid, and pinnacle—
A city of death, distinct with many a
tower,
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the
sky
Rolls its perpetual stream."

We were soon doomed to make a closer acquaintance with some of these enormous glaciers. Ere long we came to one which stretched down all the way into the river, so there was no flanking it. At first it looked as if we were painfully crossing the huge ridges of a fallen mountain; but this soon proved to be an immense glacier, very thickly covered over with slabs of clay-slate, and with large blocks of granite and gneiss, but with the solid ice underneath exposed here and there, and especially in the surfaces of the large crevasses which went down to unknown depths. This glacier, as also others which followed, was a frightfully fatiguing and exasperating thing to cross, and occupied us nearly three hours, our guides being rather at a loss in finding a way over. I should have been the whole day upon it, but for the astounding per-

performances of my little Spiti mare, which now showed how wise had been the selection of it for this difficult journey. Never had I before fully realised the goat-like agility of these animals, and I almost despair of making her achievements credible. She sprang from block to block of granite, even with my weight upon her, like an ibex. No one who had not seen the performance of a Spiti pony could have believed it possible for any animal of the kind to go over the ground at all, and much less with a rider upon it. But this mare went steadily with me up and down the ridges, over the great rough blocks of granite and the treacherous slabs of slate. I had to dismount and walk, or rather climb, a little only three or four times, and that not so much from necessity as from pity for the little creature, which was trembling in every limb from the great leaps and other exertions which she had to make. On these occasions she required no one to lead her, but followed us like a dog, and was obedient to the voice of her owner. Shortly before coming to the glacier I thought she was going over a precipice with me, owing to her losing her footing on coming down some high steps; but she saved herself by falling on her knees and then making a marvellous side spring. On the glacier, also, though she sometimes lost her footing, yet she always managed to recover it immediately in some extraordinary way. Her great exertions there did not require any goad, and arose from her own spirit and eager determination to overcome the obstacles which presented themselves, though in ordinary circumstances she was perfectly placid, and content to jog along as slowly as might be. Even when I was on this mare she would poise herself on the top of a block of granite, with her four feet close together after the manner

of a goat, and she leaped across crevasses of unknown depth after having to go down a slippery slope on one side, and when, on the other, she had nothing to jump upon except steeply-inclined blocks of stone. The two Loisar yaks also, magnificent black creatures with enormous white tails, did wonders; but their indignant grunting was something to hear. They had to be goaded a good deal, and were not so surprising as the slender-legged Spiti mare. Of course the latter had no shoes; and it is not usual to shoe the horses of the Himáliya, though they do so sometimes in Kashmir; and in Wukhan, to the north of the Oxus, there is the curious compromise of shoeing them with deer's horn, which protects the hoofs, while presenting a surface less slippery than iron, and one more congenial to the horse's tender foot. There was something affecting in the interest which this mare and some of the other mountain ponies I had elsewhere, took in surmounting difficulties, and not less so in the eagerness, at stiff places, of the foals which often accompanied us without carrying any burden. Thus in early youth they get accustomed to mountain journeys and to the strenuous exertions which these involve. At the same time, the Himáliyan ponies husband their breath very carefully in going up long ascents, and no urging on these occasions will force them to go faster than they think right, or prevent them from stopping every now and then just as long as they think proper. These are matters which must be left entirely to the ponies themselves, and they do not abuse the liberty which they claim. More trying is their fondness for trotting or ambling down the steepest ascents on which they can at all preserve their footing; and they show considerable impatience when

restrained from doing so, and have expressive ways of their own of saying to their rider, "Why don't you trust me and let me go down at my own pace? I shall take you quite safely." This ambling down a precipitous mountain-side is particularly unpleasant when the path is a corkscrew one, with many and sharp turnings, because when the pony rushes down at a turning, it seems as if its impetus must carry it on and over; but at the last moment it manages to twist itself round, so that it can proceed in another direction; and I think these intelligent little creatures take a pride in making as narrow a shave of the precipice as possible, and in making their riders feel as uncomfortable as they can. They are also great in wriggling you round delicate points of rock, where the loss of half an inch would send both horse and rider into the abyss. They do positively enjoy these ticklish places; and the more ticklish the place and the deeper the precipice below, the more do they enjoy it, and the more preternaturally sagacious do they become. They sniff at such a place with delight; get their head and neck round the turning; experiment carefully to feel that the pressure of your knee against the rock will not throw the whole concern off its balance, and then they wriggle their bodies round triumphantly. I speak in this way, however, only of the best ponies of Spiti and Zanskar, and not of those of Lahaul, or of any of the lower Himāliyan provinces, which are much inferior.

While stopping for breakfast on this great glacier, the ice beneath the stones on which we were gave a great crack, and the stones themselves sank a little way. This caused a general removal, and it looked as if we had seated ourselves for breakfast over a crevasse (not a wise

thing to do), the mouth of which had been blocked up with stones. To do Silas and Nurdass justice, they stuck by the breakfast-things and removed these also; but that was, perhaps, because they did not understand the danger we were in. The place had been selected because of its affording shelter from the wind; but when, after the crack occurred, I examined it closely, I saw quite clearly that we had been sitting between the lips of a crevasse which had got blocked up with rocks, and that the place was eminently an unsafe one. Our Loisar *bigarries* had a story about the rocks on this glacier having been owing to the fall of a mountain-peak which had formerly existed in the immediate neighbourhood. Very possibly there may have been a land-slip of the kind; but the coolies varied in their legend about the fall of the peak, some saying that it occurred two generations, and others twelve years, ago. When questioned on the subject, they acknowledged that the glacier must move, because every summer they had to find a new path across it, and had to erect fresh marks in order to indicate the way. There are so many crumbling peaks and precipices about the great fountains of this glacier, that there is no absolute need for the theory or legend of the Loisar people to explain its covered condition. This glacier clearly arose from a number of large glaciers meeting in a great valley above, filling that up, and then pushing themselves over its rim in one great ice-stream down to the river; and the crumbling precipices and peaks around were quite sufficient to supply the rocks we saw below. So compact had the covering got, that in some places I observed grass and flowers growing on this glacier. Coleridge has sung of the "living flowers that

skirt the eternal frost," but here the flowers were blooming on the eternal frost itself.

Occasionally, I think, a living flower is found on Swiss glaciers, but very rarely—whereas on the Himáliyan, flowers are by no means uncommon; and the circumstance is easily accounted for by the greater power of the sun in the Himáliyan regions, and also by the fact, that when the glaciers get down a certain distance, they are so thickly covered by shattered rocks that they have to work their way, as it were, underground. In Switzerland, one often sees the great ploughshare of a glacier coming down into a green valley and throwing up the turf before it; but usually among the Himáliya, long before the glacier reaches any green valley, it is literally overwhelmed and buried beneath the shattered fragments of rock from the gigantic precipices and peaks around. This slackens, without altogether arresting, its progress; so that in many places the debris is allowed sufficient rest to permit of the growth of grass and flowers. It struck me that in some places there were even what might be called subterranean glaciers; that is to say, that the fallen debris had so formed together and solidified, that the ice-stream worked below it without disturbing the solidified surface.

And here, as I am well acquainted with the Alps,* it may not be amiss for me to compare the Himáliya with these European mountains, which are so well known to the English public. The Himáliya, as a whole, are not so richly appavelled as the Alps. In Kashmir, and some parts of the Sulej valley, and of the valleys on their Indian front, they are rich in the most glorious vegetation, and present, in

that respect, a more picturesque appearance than any parts of Switzerland can boast of; but one may travel among the great ranges of the Asiatic mountains for weeks, and even months, through the most sterile scenes, without coming on any of these regions of beauty. There is not here the same close union of beauty and grandeur, loveliness and sublimity, which is everywhere to be found over the Alps. There is a terrible want of level ground and of green meadows enclosed by trees. Except in Kashmir, and about the east of Ladák, there are no lakes. We miss much those Swiss and Italian expanses of deep blue water, in which white towns and villages, snowy peaks and dark mountains, are so beautifully mirrored. There is also a great want of perennial waterfalls of great height and beauty, such as the Staubbach; though in summer, during the heat of the day, the Himáliya, in several places, present long graceful streaks of dust-foam.

The striking contrasts and the more wonderful scenes are not crowded together as they are in Switzerland. Both eye and mind are apt to be wearied among the Himáliya by the unbroken repetition of similar scenes during continuous and arduous travel, extending over days and weeks together; and one sorely misses Goethe's *Est-schen*, or the beautiful little corners of nature which satisfy the eye and mind alike. The picture is not sufficiently filled up in its detail, and the continuous repetition of the vast outlines is apt to become oppressive. The very immensity of the Himáliya prevents us from often beholding at a glance, as among the Alps, the wonderful contrast of green meadows, darker pines, green

splintered glaciers, dark precipitous cliffs, blue distant hills, white slopes of snow and glittering icy summits. There are points in the Sutelj valley and in Kashmir where something like this is presented, and in a more overpowering manner than anywhere in Europe; but months of difficult travel separate these two regions, and their beauty cannot be said to characterise the Himáliya generally. But what, even in Switzerland, would be great mountains, are here dwarfed into insignificant hills; and it requires some time for the eye to understand the immense Himáliyan heights and depths. Some great rock, or the foot of some precipice, which is pointed out as our camping-place for the night, looks at first as if it were only a few hundred feet off, but after hours of arduous ascent, it seems almost as far off as ever.

The human element of the Western mountains is greatly wanting in those of the East; for though here and there a monastery like Ki, or a village like Dankar, may stand out picturesquely on the top of a hill, yet, for the most part, the dingy-coloured, flat-roofed Himáliyan hamlets are not easily distinguishable from the rocks amid which they stand. The scattered *châlets* and *sen* huts of Switzerland are wholly wanting; and the European traveller misses the sometimes bright and comely faces of the peasantry of the Alps. I need scarcely say, also, that the more wonderful scenes of the Abode of Snow are far from being easily accessible, even when we are in the heart of the great mountains. And it can hardly be said that the cloudland of the Himáliya is so varied and gorgeous as that of the mountains of Europe, though the sky is of a deeper blue, and the heavens are much more brilliant at night.

But when all these admissions in

favour of Switzerland are made, the Himáliya still remain unsurpassed, and even unapproached, as regards all the wilder and grander features of mountain scenery. There is nothing in the Alps which can afford even a faint idea of the savage desolation and appalling sublimity of many of the Himáliyan scenes. Nowhere, also, have the faces of the mountains been so scarred and riven by the nightly action of frost, and the mid-day floods from melting snow. In almost every valley we see places where whole peaks or sides of great mountains have very recently come shattering down; and the thoughtful traveller must feel that no power or knowledge he possesses can secure him against such a catastrophe, or prevent his bones being buried, so that there would be little likelihood of their release until the solid earth dissolves. And, though rare, there are sudden passages from these scenes of grandeur and savage desolation to almost tropical luxuriance, and more than tropical beauty, of organic nature. Such changes are startling and delightful, as in the passage from Dras into the upper Sind valley of Kashmir; while there is nothing finer in the world of vegetation than the great cedars, pines, and sycamores of many of the lower valleys.

It is needless to look in the Himáliya for a population so energetic and interesting as the Swiss, the Vaudois, or the Tyrolese; and these mountains have no women whose attractions at all approach those of the Italian side of the Alps from Lugano eastward, or of the valleys of the Engadine and the Tyrol. The Tibetan population is hardly abundant enough, or of sufficiently strong *morale*, for heroic or chivalric efforts, such as have been made by the ancient Greeks, the Swiss, the Waldenses, the Scotch Highlanders,

and the mountaineers of some other parts of Europe and even of Asia. There are traditions enough among the Himáliya, but they usually relate either to the founding of monasteries, the destruction of invaders, like Zorawar Singh, whose forces had been previously dispersed by the troops of Lassa; or the death of travelling-parties in snowstorms, and from the avalanches of snow or rock. Nowhere, unless in the vast cloudy forms of Hindú mythology, do we meet with traditions of heroes or sages of whom it can be said, that

“Their spirits wrapt the dusky mountain;
Their mem’ry sparkled o’er the fountain;
The meanest rill, the mightiest river,
Rolled mingling with their fame for ever.”

How easily Kashmir, with a European population, might have guarded its passes and preserved its independence! but it has scarcely ever made any attempt to do so; and the people of Tibet have not shown much more heroism, though they have had abundant experience of fighting. The introduction of Búdhiism into this elevated country was no doubt accomplished only by means of much self-sacrifice on the part of its early missionaries; but the shadowy forms of that age are most indistinctly seen, and have little attraction for the modern European. There is much of interest, however, in Lamaism and in the very peculiar customs of the Tibetan race; and I found it impossible to move among these people, especially in the more primitive parts of the country, without contracting a great liking for them, and admiration for their honesty, their patience, and their placidity of temper, in circumstances which must be trying for these virtues.

The Alps extend only for about 600 miles, counting their extreme length from Hungary to the Mediterranean, and their lateral extent is very narrow; but the Himáliya

proper are at least 1,500 miles in length. They are a great deal more if we add to them the Hindú Kúsh, which really constitute only a continuation of the range, and their breadth is so great that at some points it is more than half the entire length of the Alps. If, as Royle remarks, we consider the Hindú Kúsh to be a continuation, not so much of the Kuen-lung, as of the Himáliya, then these latter extend from the equator (by their branches into the Malaya Peninsula) to 45 degrees of north latitude, and over 73 degrees of longitude. That is a gigantic space of the earth’s surface, and affords a splendid base for the giant peaks which rise up to almost 30,000 feet; but, as I have already hinted, there is even more meaning than this, and more propriety than the Arabs themselves understood, in their phrase, “The Stony Girdle of the Earth,” because this great central range can easily be traced from the mountains of Formosa in the China Sea to the Pyrenees, where they sink into the Mediterranean. This fact has not escaped the notice of geographers; and Dr Mackay, especially, has drawn attention to it in his admirable ‘Manual of Modern Geography,’ though he has not known the expressive phrase of his Arab predecessors. The Western Himáliya are a series of nearly parallel ranges lying from south-east to north-west. They are properly the Central Himáliya; the Hindú Kúsh are the Western; and what are now called the Central Himáliya are the Eastern. These are the most obvious great natural divisions; but additional confusion is caused by the Inner Himáliya, or the interior ranges, being also sometimes spoken of as the Central. It is more usual, however, to take the Pamir Steppe as a centre, and to speak of the western range as a boundary wall to the high table-land of Western

Asia, separating the waters of the Arabian Gulf from those of the Caspian, the Black Sea, and the Aral. That portion consists of the Hindú Kúsh, the Parapomisan mountains, the Elburz, the Zagros of Kurdistan, Ararat and the Armenian mountains, the Taurus and Anti-Taurus; and these are continued through Europe in the mountains of Greece and European Turkey, the Alps, the Cevennes, and the Pyrenees. The south-eastern range runs from the Pamir to the China Sea, in the Himáliya, and in the branches from it which go down into the Malay Peninsula and Annam. The eastern range goes nearly due east from the Pamir to the Pacific in the Kuen-lung, and in the Pe-ling, which separate the Yang-tsze from the Yellow River. There is also a north-east range, which runs from the Pamir to Behring's Strait, including the Tengu Tagh, and several ranges in Siberia and Kamtchatka. But the Himáliya proper, with which we are concerned, may be said to be enclosed by the Indus, the Brahmapútra, and the great northern plain of India. That is a very simple and intelligible boundary line; for the two rivers rise close together in, or in the near neighbourhood of, Lake Mansoráwar; in the first part of their course they

flow close behind the great ranges of the Himáliya, and they cut through the mountains at points where there is some reason for considering that new ranges commence.

In adopting "The Abode of Snow" as the running title of these papers, I only gave the literal meaning of the word Himáliya, which is a Sanscrit word, and is to be found in most of the languages of India. It is a compound word, composed of *hima*, snow or winter, and *aliya* or *alāya*, an abode or place. Its component parts are thus *Hima-aliya*; and as the double *a* is contracted into one, even the infant philologist of modern times will perceive the erroneousness of our ordinary English way of pronouncing the word as "Himálāya."* The Sanscrit word *hima* is also sometimes used to signify the moon and a pearl; but even thus a portion of its original meaning is denoted. No doubt this *hima* is closely cognate with the Latin *hiems* and *hibernus*, for *himermus*; with the Greek *χίμα* (*χείμα*), the Persico-Zend *zim* and *zima*, and the Slavonic *zima*; a word used for winter. As the great Abode of the Gods is held by the Hindus to be in the Himáliya, and the word Himáliya itself is used by them in that sense, it is obvious

* We are not quite so bad as the French in this respect; but, as a general rule, the infant philologist (and all infants are in a fair way of being philologists nowadays) will find it pretty safe always to reverse the accents which he finds Englishmen putting upon foreign names. Even such a simple and obvious word as Brindisi we must turn into Brindísi; and it is still worse when we come to give names of our own to localities. What a descent from "The Abode of Snow" to "The Hills" of the Anglo-Indians, even when the latter phrase may come from a rosebud mouth! But that is not so striking an example of our national taste as one which has occurred in Jamaica, where a valley which used to be called by the Spaniards the "Bocaguas," or "Mouth of the Waters," has been transmuted by us into "Bog Walks." A still more curious transmutation, though of a reverse order, occurred in Hong-Kong, in the early days of that so-called colony. There was a street there, much frequented by sailors, in which Chinese damsels used to sit at the windows and greet the passers-by with the invitation, "Come 'long, Jack;" consequently the street became known by the name of the "Come 'long Street," which in the Chinese mouth was *Kum Láng*, or "The Golden Dragon." So, when the streets were named and placarded, "Come along Street" appeared, both in Chinese and English, as the Street of the Golden Dragon.

that *Himmel*, the German word for heaven, comes from the same source; and it is the only instance I know of in European languages which takes in both compounds. This must surely have occurred to the lexicographers, but I have not noticed any reference to it. It also occurs to me that the word "Imaus," which Milton uses in the third book of 'Paradise Lost,' and which he took from Pliny, may very likely be from *himas*, another Sanscrit form used for winter and for the Himáliya. In Hindu mythology these mountains are personified as the husband of Manaka. He was also the father of Dúrga, the great goddess of destruction, who became incarnate as Parvati, or the "daughter of the mountain," in order to captivate Síva and withdraw him from a penance which he had undertaken to perform in the Himáliya. It is, then, with the god of destruction and his no less terrible spouse, that the Himáliya are more specially associated, rather than with the brighter form of Vishnu, the Preserver; but the whole Hindu pantheon are also regarded as dwelling among the inaccessible snowy peaks of these inaccessible mountains. Neither Cretan Ida nor Thessalian Olympus can boast of such a company; and, looking up to the snows of the Kailas, it may well be said that

"Every legend fair,
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carv'd out of Nature for itself, is there."

Being a boundary wall to the Tibetan and other elevated plains of Central Asia, the Himáliya are usually steep towards the Indian side, and more gradual towards the north, the strata dipping to the north-east; but this rule has many exceptions, as in the case of the Kailas and the lofty mountains forming the southern boundary of the Shigri valley. There

the fall is as abrupt as it could well be towards the north, and the 23,000-foot Akun peaks in Súrú seem to stand up like needles. The statement frequently made that there is more soil and more springs on the northern than on the southern side, applies specially only to that portion of the exterior range which runs from the Narkanda Ghaut up to the Kailas. The line of perpetual snow is very high in the Himáliya, and its height detracts somewhat from their grandeur in July and August, though that increases their savage appearance. In the western ranges it goes up so high as 18,500 on their southern, and 19,000 feet on their northern faces; but this only means that we find exposed surfaces of rock at these heights, and must not be taken as a literal rule. Where snow can lodge it is rare to find bare tracts above 16,000 feet at any period of the year; and even in August a snow-storm may cover everything down to 12,000 feet, or even lower. There are great beds of snow and glaciers which remain unremoved during the summer far below 18,000 feet. In the Swiss Alps the line of perpetual snow is 8900 feet; so there is the enormous difference on this point of 10,000 feet between the two mountain ranges; and so it may be conceived how intense must be the heat in summer of the deeper valleys of the Himáliya: but in winter the snow comes down in the latter mountains to 3000 feet, or lower occasionally; so that there may be a range of 26,000 feet of snow instead of 14,000 as among the Alps.

The arrest of the clouds of the Indian south-east monsoon on the outer range of the Himáliya combines, with other causes, to create an extraordinary dryness of atmosphere, and this aridity increases on the steppes beyond. Hence, even when the temperature

may be very low, there is often very little snow to be deposited, and the accumulations on the high mountains have been the work of ages. It has often been observed, in polar and mountainous regions, how great is the power of solar rays passing through highly rarefied air; and upon the great heights of the Himáliya, the effect of these rays is something terrible. When they are reflected from new-fallen snow their power is so intense, that I have seen them raise my thermometer (when placed at a particular angle against a great sheet of sun-lit snow and exposed at the same time to the direct rays of the sun) from a little above freezing point, which was the temperature of the air, to 192° Fahrenheit, or between the points at which spirits boil and water boils at the level of the sea. It is remarkable that in spite of this, and though snow-blindness is often the result, yet no cases of sunstroke appear to occur in the Himáliya, and supports the theory that sunstroke partakes more of the character of heat-apoplexy than of mere injury to the head in the first instance. The difference of temperature between the days and nights is not such as might be expected from the extremely rapid radiation of heat there is at high altitudes. The change arising from that cause would be almost killing were it not for the fortunate fact that the atmosphere forced up by the warmth of the day descends at night, and, being condensed, gives out heat. The cold of the Himáliya has been known suddenly to kill people when they were exposed to sudden gusts of wind, though they could safely have borne a much lower temperature in still air. The wind is certainly the great drawback both to health and comfort among these great mountains; but, as we have

seen, it has its advantage, being caused by the elevation of heated air from below, which, afterwards descending and contracting, renders the nights endurable. I understand that the monks of St Bernard, who go up to that monastery at eighteen years of age, vowed to remain there for fifteen years, only in rare instances are able to remain so long, and that does not say much for high mountain air; but it may be the seclusion of their life up there, and other defects in it, which makes that life so injurious to them. If any one would allow me a thousand a-year on condition that I always keep above 12,000 feet, I should be happy to make the experiment, and to write a warm obituary notice of my benefactor when he dies below.

But to return to the Shigri valley: my second camping-place there was destitute of wood; but it was very grassy and sheltered. The *bigarrées* had the advantage of an immense stone under which there were small hollows for them to sleep in; and there was good water accessible, which is often a difficulty, because though there may be "water, water everywhere" about in those regions, both in a solid and a liquid shape, it does not necessarily follow that it can be easily got at; for you may have to descend a precipice of a thousand feet in order to get at the river, or to ascend as high to reach the glacier, which ceases to give out streams towards evening. At three p.m., the thermometer was so low as 40°, though during the day there had been a blazing sun and no clouds. From this spot, on the third day, the road was literally frightful, not so much in the sense of being dangerous as exasperating. It chiefly went over great stones, with scarcely the affectation, even, of a track. Sometimes it followed the bed of the

Chandra, anon ascended the steep stony or precipitous banks of that river, and wound along the edge of precipices on paths fit only for deer or goats. We had to ford quite a number of cold streams, which did not fail to evoke plaintive cries from the women, and crossed at the foot of several glaciers, which did not appear to descend quite to the river, but very possibly did so, because I had neither time nor patience for close examination, and the shattered debris I several times crossed might well have had ice beneath. It was necessary to dismount and scramble on foot every now and then; and nine continuous hours of this sort of thing were too much for an invalid. The Spiti pony could be trusted almost implicitly; but many of the ascents were too much for it with a rider; riding among the great stones endangered one's knees, and, on some of the high paths, there was not room for it to pass with a rider. And if the pony could be trusted, not so could its saddle, which very nearly brought us both to grief. We came to some high steps—that is to say, large stones lying so as to make natural steps each about two and a half or three feet high—leading down upon a narrow rock ledge, which ran (above a precipice) slightly turned inwards from the line of descent. It was madness to ride down here; but I had been so worried by the fatigue of the road, and by constant mounting and dismounting, that I preferred doing so, and the pony quite justified my confidence. But at the most critical moment, when it stepped with both feet from the last stone on to the ledge, when I was leaning back to the very utmost, and everything was at the highest strain, then, just as its feet struck the rock, the crupper gave way, and the saddle slipped forward

on the pony's neck, throwing us both off our balance. We must have both gone over hundreds of feet had not a preservative instinct enabled me to throw myself off the saddle upon the ledge of rock. This movement, of course, was calculated to send the pony outwards, and, all the more surely, overboard; but in falling I caught hold of its mane, pulled it down on the top of me, and held it there until some of the *bigarries* came to our release. A short time elapsed before they did so, and the little pony seemed quite to understand, and acquiesce in, the necessity of remaining still. I was riding alone at the time of the accident, and, had we gone over, should probably not have been missed at the time, or found afterwards. Nor can I exactly say that it was I myself who saved us both, because there was not an instant's time for thought in the matter. All I know is, that it was done, and that I was a good deal bruised and stiffened by the fall. I had to lie down, quite exhausted and sore, whenever I reached our third day's camping-ground, which was a very exposed, dusty, and disagreeable one.

Next morning I did not start till eight, and ordered all the *bigarries* to keep behind me, as I was afraid of their pushing on to Koksar, a distance which would have been too much for me. The road in many places was nearly as bad as that of the previous day, and there were dangerous descents into deep ravines; but, in part, it was very pleasant, running high above the river over rounded hills covered with flowery grass. The way was also enlivened by flocks of sheep, some laden with salt, and by very civil shepherds from Kulú and Bussahir. The usual camping-ground was occupied by large flocks,

and, for the sake of shelter, I had to camp close above a precipice. Here I purchased from the Kúlú shepherds a wonderful young dog called Djeóla, a name which, with my Indian servants and the public in general, very soon got corrupted into Julia. This animal did not promise at first to be any acquisition. Though only five or six months old, it became perfectly furious on being handed over to me and tied up. I fastened it to my tent-pole, the consequence of which was that it tore the drill, nearly pulled the tent down, hanged itself until it was insensible, and I only got sleep after somehow it managed to escape. I recovered it, however, next morning; and after a few days it became quite accustomed to me and affectionate. Djeóla was a source of constant amusement. I never knew a dog in which there was so fresh a spring of strong simple life. But the curious thing is that it had all the appearance of a Scotch collie, though considerably larger than any of these animals. Take a black-and-tan collie, double its size, and you have very much what "Julia" became after he had been a few months in my possession; for when I got him he was only five or six months old. The only differences were that the tail was thicker and more bushy, the jaw more powerful, and he had large dew claws upon his hind feet. Black dogs of this kind are called *susa* by the Tibetans, and the red species, of which I had a friend at Pú, are *mustang*. The wild dog is said to go up to the snow-line in the Himálya, and to hunt in packs; but I never saw or heard of any, and I suspect their habitat is only the Indian side of the Himálya. Such packs of dogs undoubtedly exist on the Western Ghauts of India, and they are not afraid of attacking the tiger, overcoming it piecemeal,

while the enraged lord of the forest can only destroy a small number of his assailants; but very little is really known about them. An interesting field for the zoologist is still open in an examination of the wild dog of Western India, the wild ass, yak, and horse of Tibet, and the wild camel, which is rumoured still to exist in the forests to the east of Yarkund. I mentioned this latter animal to Dr Stolicska, who had not heard of it, and thought that such camels would be only specimens of the domestic species which had got loose and established themselves, with their progeny, in the wilderness; but the subject is worthy of investigation, from a scientific point of view; and, perhaps, the Yarkand Mission may have brought back some information in regard to it.

But though Djeóla was most savage on being tied up and transferred to a new owner, there was nothing essentially savage, rude, brutish, or currish in its nature. Indeed it very soon reminded me of the admirable words of one of the most charming of English writers upon dogs: "Take an example of a Dogy, and mark what generosity and courage he will put on when he is maintained by a man who to him is instead of a god or *Melior Natura*." It not only became reconciled to me, but watched over me with an almost ludicrous fidelity, and never got entirely reconciled even to my servants. The striking my tent in the morning was an interference with its private property to which it strongly objected, and if not kept away at that time it would attack the *bigarries* engaged. I also found on getting to Kashmir that it regarded all Sahibs as suspicious characters, to be laid hold of at once; but, fortunately, it had a way of seizing them with-

out doing much damage, as it would hold a sheep, and the men it did seize were good-natured sportsmen. It delighted in finding any boy among our *bigarries* that it could tyrannise over, but never really hurt him. It was very fond of biting the heels of yaks and horses, and then thinking itself ill-treated when they kicked. Its relations with Nako were also amusing. That old warrior had no jealousy of Djeóla, and treated it usually with silent contempt, unless it drew near when he was feeding—a piece of temerity which the young dog soon learned the danger of. But Djeóla would sometimes indulge in gamesome and affectionate fits towards Nako, which the latter never invited and barely tolerated, and which usually resulted in a short and sharp fight, in which Djeóla got speedily vanquished, but took its punishment as a matter of course, and without either fear or anger. I had intended this Himáliyan giant sheep-dog for the admirable writer and genial sage, Dr John Brown,

who has given us 'Rab and his Friends,' who would have been able to do justice to its merits and compare it with the sheep-dogs of Scotland, but could not arrange that conveniently, and left it with a friend at Púna.

When in the Shigri valley I kept a watch for any symptoms of gold, but did not notice any, and on other grounds should not think it likely that gold exists there in any quantity. But Mr Theodor, a German employed in carrying out the construction of the road over the Barra Lucka Pass, told me that he had found silver ore in this valley. I may mention that the first great glacier which I crossed has pushed its way into the Chandra, and threatens to close up that river in a very serious manner, as it once did before, which might lead to disasters in the valleys of the Chandra-Bhaga and of the Chenab, similar to those which occurred in the Drance and upper Rhone valleys of Switzerland in 1595 and 1819.

ALICE LORRAINE.

A TALE OF THE SOUTH DOWNS.

PART XL.—CHAPTER LVI.

SIR ROLAND LORRAINE was almost as free from superstition as need be. To be wholly quit of that romantic element, is a disadvantage still; and excepts a neighbour even now from the general neighbourly sympathy. Threescore years ago, of course, that prejudice was threefold.

The swing of British judgment mainly takes magnetic repulse from whatever the French are rushing after. When they are Republican, all of us rally for throne and Constitution. When they have a Parliament, we want none. When they are pressed under empire, we are apt to be glad that it serves them right. We know them to be brave and good, lovers of honour, and sensitive; but we cannot get over the line between us and them—and the rest of the world, perhaps.

Whatever might be said, or reasoned, for or against the whole of things, Sir Roland had long made up his mind to be moderate and neutral. He liked everybody to speak his best (according to self-opinion), and he liked to keep out of the way of them all, and relapse into the wiser ages. He claimed his own power to think for himself, as well as the mere right of doing so. And therefore he long had been "heterodox" to earnest, right-minded people.

Never the more, however, could he shake himself free from the in-born might of hereditary leanings. The traditions of his house and race had still some power over him, a power increased by long seclusion, and the love of hearth and home. Therefore, when Trotman was cut

off, on his way for his weekly paper, by a great black gliding flood, and aghast ran up the Coombe to tell it—Sir Roland, while he smiled, felt strange misgivings creeping coldly.

Alice, a sweet and noble maiden, on the tender verge of womanhood, came to her father's side, and led him back to his favourite book-room. She saw that he was at the point of trembling; although he could still command his nerves, unless he began to think of them. Dissembling her sense of all this, she sat by the fire, and waited for him.

"My darling, we have had a very happy time," he began at last to say to her; "you and I for many years, suiting one another."

"To be sure we have, father. And I mean to go on, suiting you for many more years yet."

Her father saw by the firelight the sadness in her eyes; and he put some gaiety into his own, or tried.

"Lallie, you have brighter things before you—a house of your own, and society, and the grand world, and great shining."

"Excellent things, no doubt, my father; but not to be compared with you and home. Have I done anything to vex you, that you talk like this to me?"

"Let me see. Come here and show me. There are few things I enjoy so much as being vexed by you."

"There, papa, you are in a hurry to have your usual laugh at me. You shall have no material now. 'I knows what is right, and I means

to do it'—as the man said to me at the turnpike-gate, when he made me pay twice over. Consider yourself, my darling father, saddled for all your life with me."

Sir Roland loved his daughter's quick bright turns of love, and loving passion, when her heart was really moved. A thousand complex moods and longings played around or pierced her then; yet all controlled, or at least concealed, by an English lady's quietude. Alice was so like himself, that he always knew what she would think; and he tried his best to follow the zig-zag flash of feminine feeling.

"My dear child," he said at last; "something has been too much for you. Perhaps that foolish fellow's story of this mysterious water. A gross exaggeration, doubtless. The finny tribe sticking fast by the gills in the nest of the wood-pigeon. Marry come up! Let us see these wonders. The moon is at the full to-night; and I hear no rain on the windows now. Go and fetch my crabstick, darling."

"Oh, may I come with you, papa? Do say yes. I shall lie awake all night, unless I go. The moon is sure to clear the storm off; and I will wrap up so thoroughly."

"But you cannot wrap up your feet, dear child; and the roads are continually flooded now."

"Not on the chalk, papa; never on the chalk, except in the very hollow places. Besides, I will put on my new French clogs. They can't be much less than six inches thick. I shall stand among the deluge high enough for the fish to build their nests on me."

"Daughter of folly, and no child of mine, go and put your clogs on. We will go out at the eastern door, to arouse no curiosity."

As the master and his daughter passed beneath the astrologer's tower, and left the house by his

private entrance, they could not help thinking of the good old prince, and his kind anxiety about them. To the best of their knowledge, the wise Agasicles had never heard of the Woeburn; or perhaps his mind had been so much engrossed with the comet that he took no heed of it. And even in his time, this strange river was legendary as the Hydaspes.

After the heavy and tempestuous rain, the night was fair, as it generally is, even in the worst of weather, when the full moon rises. The long-chined hill, with its level outline stretching towards the south of east, afforded play for the glancing light of a watery and laborious moon. Long shadows, laid in dusky bars, or cast in heavy masses where the hollow land prevailed for them, and misty columns hovering and harbouring over tree-clumps, and gleams of quiet light pursuing avenues of opening—all of these, at every step of deep descent, appeared to flicker like a great flag waving.

"What a very lovely night! How beautifully the clouds lie!" cried Alice, being apt to kindle rashly into poetry: "they softly put themselves in rows, and then they float towards the moon, and catch the silver of her smile—oh why do they do that, papa?"

"Because the wind is west, my dear. Take care; you are on a great flint, I fear. You are always cutting your boots out."

"No, papa, no. I have got you this time. That shows how much you attend to me. I have got my great French clogs on."

"Then how very unsafe to be looking at the moon! Lean on me steadily, if you must do that. The hill is slippery with slime on the chalk. You will skate away to the bottom, and leave me mourning."

"Oh, how I should love to skate, if ladies ever could do such a thing!

I can slide very nicely, as you know, papa. Don't you think, after all this rain, we are sure to have a nice cold winter?"

"Who can tell, Lallie? I only hope not. You children, with your quick circulation, active limbs, and vigorous lungs, are always longing for frost and snow. But when they come, you get tired of them, within a week at the utmost. But in your selfish spring of life, you forget all the miseries of the poor and old, or even young folk who are poor, and the children starving everywhere. And the price of all food is now most alarming."

"I am sure I meant no harm," said Alice; "one cannot always think of everything. Papa, do you know that you have lately taken to be very hard upon me?"

"Well now, everybody says that of me," Sir Roland answered, thoughtfully; "I scarcely dreamed that my fault was that. But out of many mouths I am convicted. Struan Hales says it; and so does my mother. Hilary seemed to imply it also, at the time when he last was heard of. Mine own household, Trotman, Mrs Pipkins, and that charitable Mrs Merryjack, have combined to take the same view of me. There must be truth in it. I cannot make head against such a cloud of witnesses. And now Alice joins them. What more do I want? I must revise my opinion of myself, and confess that I am a hard-hearted man."

This question Sir Roland debated with himself, in a manner which had long been growing upon him, in the gathering love of solitude. Being by nature a man with a most extraordinary love of justice, he found it hard (as such rare men do) to be perfectly sure about anything. He always desired to look at a subject from every imaginable outside view, receding (like a lark in the

clouds) from groundling consideration, yet frankly open (like a woodcock roasting) to anything good put under him. Nobody knew him; but he did his best, when he thought of that matter, to know himself.

Now, his daughter allowed him to follow out his meditation quietly; and then she said, as they went down the hill, warily heeding each other's steps—

"Papa, I beg you particularly to pay no attention whatever to your own opinion, or any other opinion in the world, except perhaps, at least, perhaps——"

"Perhaps that of Alice."

"Quite so, papa. About my own affairs my opinion is of no value; but about yours, and the family in general, it is really—something."

"Wisest of our race, and bravest, you are rushing into the water, darling—stop; you have forgotten what we came for. We came to see the Woeburn, and here it is!"

"Is this it? And yesterday I walked across this very place! Oh, what a strange black river!"

As Alice drew suddenly back and shuddered, Sir Roland Lorraine threw his left arm round her, without a word, and looked at her. The light of the full moon fell on her face, through a cleft of jagged margins, and the shadow of a branch that had lost its leaves lay on her breast, and darkened it.

"Why, Lallie, you seem to be quite frightened," her father said, after waiting long; "look up at me, and tell me, dear."

"No, I am not at all frightened, papa, but perhaps I am a little out of spirits."

"Why?" asked Sir Roland; "you surely do not pay heed to old rhymes and silly legends. I call this a fine and most picturesque water. I only wish it were always here."

"Oh, papa, don't say that, I im-

plore you. And I felt you shiver when you saw it first. You know what it means for our family,—loss of life once, loss of property twice, and the third time the loss of honour,—and with that, of course, our extinction.”

“You little goose, none can lose their honour without dishonourable acts. Come, Miss Cassandra; of the present Lorraines—a very narrow residue—who is to be distinguished thus?”

“Father, you know so much more than I do; but I thought that many people were disgraced, without having ever deserved it.”

“Disgraced, my darling; but not dishonoured. What could disgrace ever be to us?—a thing that comes and goes, according to the fickle seasons—a result of the petty human weather, as this melancholy water is of the larger influence.”

“Papa, then you own that it is melancholy. That was just what I wanted you to do. You always take things so differently from everybody else, that I began to think you would look upon this as a happy outburst of a desirable watering-water.”

“Well done, Lallie! The command of language is an admirable gift. But the want of it leads to still finer issues. This watering-water seems inclined to go on for a long time watering.”

“Of course, it must go flowing, flowing, until its time is over.”

“Lallie, you have, among many other gifts, a decided turn for epigram. You scarcely could have described more tersely the tendencies of water. I firmly believe that this stream will go on flowing and flowing, until it quite stops.”

“Papa, you are a great deal too bad. You must perceive that you are so, even by the moonlight. I say the most sensible things ever thought of, and out of them you

make nonsense. Now let me have my turn. So please you, have you thought of bridges? How is our butcher to come, or our miller, our letters, or even our worthy beggars? We are shut off in front. Without building a boat, can I ever hear even Uncle Struan preach? Hark! I hear something like him.”

“You frivolous Lallie! you are too bad. I cannot permit such views of things.”

“Of course, papa, I never meant it. Only please to listen.”

The dark and deep stream, which now had grown to a width of some twelve yards perhaps, was gliding swiftly, but without a murmur, towards the broad and watery moon. On the right-hand side, steep scars of chalk, shedding gleams of white rays, made the hollow places darker; while on the other side, furzy tummocks, patches of briar, and tufted fallows spread the many-pointed light among their shadows justly.

“Please to listen,” again said Alice, shrinking from her father, lest she might be felt to tremble. “What a plaintive, thrilling sound! It must be a good banshee, I am sure; a banshee that knows how good we are, and protests against our extinction. There it is again—and there seems to be another wail inside of it.”

“A Chinese puzzle of noises, Lallie, and none of them very musical. Your ears are keener than mine, of course; but, being extinct of romance, I should say that I heard a donkey braying.”

“Papa, now! papa, if it comes to that—and I said it was like Uncle Struan’s voice! But I beg his pardon, quite down on my knees, if you think that it can be a donkey.”

“I am saved all the trouble of thinking about it. There he is, looking hard at us!”

“Oh no, papa, he is not looking hard at us. He is looking most

softly and sadly. What a darling donkey, and his nose is like a snow-drop!"

Clearly in the moonlight shone, on the opposite bank of the Woe-burn, the nose of Jack the donkey. His wallings had been coming long, and his supplications rising; he was cut off from his home, and fodder, and wholly beloved Bonny. And the wail inside a wail—as Alice had described it—was the sound of the poor boy's woe, responsive to the forlorn appeal of Jack. On the brink of the cruel dividing water they must have been for a long time striding up and down over against each other, stretching fond noses vainly forward, and outrying one another in the luxury of poetic woe.

"Don't say a word, papa," whispered Alice. "The boy cannot see us here behind this bush, and we can see him beautifully in the moonlight. I want to know what he will do, so much."

"I don't see what he can do except howl," Sir Roland answered quietly; "and certainly he seems to possess remarkable powers in that way."

"Bo-hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo!" wept Bonny in confirmation of this opinion; and "eke-haw, eke-haw," from a nose of copious pathos, formed the elegiac refrain. Then having exhausted the well of weeping, the boy became fitter for reasoning. He wiped his eyes with his scarlet sleeves, and stretched forth his arms reproachfully.

"Oh Jack, Jack, Jack, whatever have I done to you? All the crumb of the loaf you had, and the half of the very last orchard I run, and the prime of old Nanny's short-horns. and if you wasn't pleased, you might a' said so all the morning, Jack. There's none in all the world as knoweth what you and I be, but one another. And there's none as careth for either on us, only you and me, Jack. Don't 'ee, Jack,

don't 'ee go and run away. If 'ee do, I'll give the thieves all as we've collected, and the folks as calls us two waggabones."

"My poor boy," said Sir Roland Lorraine, suddenly parting the bush between them, in fear of another sad boo-hoo—for Bonny had stirred his own depths, so that he was quite ready to start again—"my poor boy, you seem to be very unhappy about your donkey."

Bonny made answer to never a word. This woe belonged only to Jack and himself. They could never think of being meddled with.

"Bonny," said Alice, in her soft sweet voice, and kindly touching him, as he turned away; "do you wish to know how to recover your Jack? Would you go a long way to get him back again?"

"To the outermost end of the world, Miss, if the whole of the way wor fuzz-bush. Miles and miles us have gone a'ready."

"You need not go quite to the end of the world. Instead of going up and down these banks, keep steadily up the water. In about a mile you will come to its head, if what I have heard of it is true; then keep well above it, and round the hill, and you will meet the white-nosed donkey."

"Hee-haw!" said Jack, from the opposite bank, not without a whisk of tail. Then the boy, without a word of thanks, by reason of incredulity, whistled a quick reply, and set off to test this doubtful theory.

"Observe now the bliss of possessing a donkey," Sir Roland began to meditate; "I am not at all skilful in asses, whether golden, or leaden, or wooden, or even as described by Elian. But the contempt to which they are born, proves to my mind that they do not deserve it; or otherwise how would they get it? My sentence is clumsy. My idea—if there be one

—has not managed to express itself. I hear the white-nosed donkey in the distance braying at me, with an overpowering echo of contempt. I am unequal to this contest. Let me withdraw to my book-room."

"Indeed, papa, you will do nothing of the sort. You are always withdrawing to your book-room; and even I must not come in; and what good ever comes of it? You must, if you please, make up your mind to meet things very differently. And only think how long it is since we have heard of poor Hilary! There are troubles coming, overwhelming troubles, on all with the name or the love of Lorraine, as sure as I stand, my dear father, before you."

"Then I pray you to stand behind me, Alice. What an impulsive child it is! And the moonlight, my darling, has had some effect, as it always has, wonderfully on such girls. You have worked yourself up, Lallie; I can see it. My pet, I must watch you carefully."

"What a mistake you make, papa! I never do anything of the sort. You seem to regard me as anybody's child, to be reasoned with, out of a window. I may be

supposed to say foolish things, and to imagine all sorts of nonsense; and, of course, I cannot reason, because it is not born with us. And then, when I try, I have no chance whatever; though perfect justice is my aim; and who comes lingering after me?"

"Your excellent father," Sir Roland answered, kissing away his child's excitement. "Your loving father does all this, my pet, and brings you quite home to stern reason. And now he will take you home to your home. You have caught the sad spirit of the donkey, petting; you long to go up and down this water, with some one to bewail you on the other side."

"Yes, papa, so I do. You are so clever! But I think I should go down and up, papa; if the quadruped you are thinking of went up and down."

"Now Lallie!" he said; and he said no more. For he knew that she hinted at Stephen Chapman, and wanted to fight her own battle against him, now that she was in the humour. The father was ready to put off the conflict—as all good fathers must be—and he led his dear child up the hill, or let her lead him, peacefully.

CHAPTER LVII.

Three days of gloom and storm ensued upon the outbreak of the water; while the old house at the head of the Coombe in happy ignorance looked down upon its hereditary foe. But dark forebodings and fine old stories agitated the loyal hearts of the domestics of the upper conclave,—that ancient butler Onesimus Binns, Mrs Pipkins, and Mrs Merryjack. With such uneasy feelings prevalent in the higher circle, nothing short of terror, or even panic, could be expected among the inferior dignitaries, now headed by

John Trotman. This young man had long shown himself so ambitious and aggressive, even "cockroaching," as Mrs Merryjack said, "on the most sacred rights of his betters," that the latter had really but one course left—to withdraw to their upper room, and exclude "all as didn't know how to behave theirselves."

Of these unhappily there were too many; and they seemed to enjoy themselves more freely after their degradation. For Trotman (though rapid of temper, perhaps, and given to prompt movements of the foot)

was not at all bad (when allowed his own way), and never kicked anybody who offered to be kicked. So with his dictatorship firmly established in the lesser lower regions, he became the most affable of mankind, and read all the crimes of the county to the maids, and drew forth long sighs of delicious horror, that his own brave self might console them. And now, when they heard of the sombre Woeburn, with its dismal legends, enhanced by ghastly utterances of ancient Nanny Stilgoe, and tidings brought through wailing winds of most appalling spectres, the stoutest heart was agitated with mysterious terror. At the creak of a door or the flit of a shadow, the rustle of a dry leaf or the waving of a window-blind, the hoot of an owl or even the silent creep of gloomy evening—"My goodness, Mary Ann, what was that?" Or, "Polly, come closer, I hear something;" or, "Jane, do 'ee look behind the plate-screen;" and then with one voice, "John, John, John, come down; that's a dear man, John!" Such was the state of the general nerve, as proved by many a special appeal from kitchen, back-kitchen, and scullery, pantry, terrible cellar, or lonesome wash-house; and the best of everything was kept for John.

Even in the world of finer, feebler, and more foreign English; in dining-room, drawing-room, parlour,³ and book-room, and my lady's chamber, a mild uneasiness prevailed, and a sense of evil auspices. Lady Valeria, most of all, who carried conservatism into relapse, felt that troublous days were coming, and almost longed to depart in peace; or at any rate she said so. But with her keen mind, and legal insight, she was bound to perceive that the authorised version of the other world is most democratic; as might be that of this world, if Chris-

tianity made Christians. Therefore her ladyship preferred to wait. Things might get better; and they could scarcely get worse. She had a good deal to see to and settle among things strictly visible, and she threatened everybody with her decease; but did not prepare to make it.

Sir Roland Lorraine, on the other hand, paid little heed, of his own accord, to superstitious vanities. He found a good many instances, in classic, Persian, and Italian literature, of the outbreak of underground waters; and there it was always a god who caused it—either by chasing river-nymphs, or by showing the power of a horse's heels, or from benevolent motives, and a desire to water gardens. Therefore Sir Roland gathered hope. He had not invested his mind as yet in implicit faith in anything; but rather was inclined to be tolerant, and tentative, and diffident of his own opinions. And these not being particularly strong, self-assertive, or self-important, and not being founded on any rock, but held on the briefest building-lease, their owner, leaseholder, or tenant-at-will, was a very pleasant man to talk with.

That means, of course, when he could be got to talk. And less and less could he be got to talk, as the few people who had the key to his liking dropped off; and no others came. Never, even in his brightest days, had he been wont to sparkle, flash, or even glow, in converse. He simply had a soft large way of listening, and a small dry knack of so diverting serious thought, that genial minds went roving. But now his own mind had grown more and more accustomed to go a-roving; and though, having never paid any attention to questions of science, or even to the weather (now gradually becoming one of them), he could not satisfy himself about the menacing

appearance; in a very few hours he buried the portent in a still more portentous pile of books.

But Alice, though fond of reading and of meditating in her little way, was too full of youth and of healthy life to retire into the classic ages of even our English language. Her delight was rather in the writers of the day, so many of whom were making themselves the writers of all future days—Coleridge, Wordsworth, Campbell, and above all others, the Wizard of the North, whose lays of romance and legend were a spur that raised the clear spirit of Alice.

On the third day from the Woe-burn's rise, she sat in her garden-bower absorbed in her favourite 'Lady of the Lake.' Her bower, though damp and mossy, and dishevelled by the storms of autumn, was still a pleasant place to rest in, when the view was clear and bright. The fairest view, however, now, and the most attractive study, were not of flower, and tree, and landscape, but of face and figure—the face of Alice Lorraine, so gentle, pure, and rapt with poetic thought; and the perfect maiden form inspired by the roused nobility of the mind. The hair in lines of flowing softness falling back disclosed the clear tranquillity of forehead, in contrast with the quick tremor of lip, and the warmth that tinted, now and then, the delicate moulding of bright young cheeks. And as the sweet face, more and more lit up with sequent thought, and bowed with the flitting homage of a reader, genial tears for dead and buried love, and grief, and gallantry arose, and glistened in dark grey eyes, and hung like the gem that quivers in the lashes of the sun-dew.

"Plaize, Miss Halice, my leddy desireth to see you, to wonst, if you plaize, Miss."

Thus spake the practical, but in

appearance most unpoetical, Trotman, glancing at Alice, and then at her book, with more curiosity than he durst convey. "Please to say that I will be with her as soon as I can finish some important work," she answered, speedily quenching Trotman's hope of finding out what she was reading, so as to melt the housemaids therewith at night. "Well, she always were a rum un," he muttered in his disappointment as he returned to his own little room, which he always called his "study;" "the captain will have to stand on his head to please her, or I'm mistaken. Why, a body scarce dare look at her. Sooner him than me, say I; although she is such a booty. But the old un will give her her change, I hope."

Meanwhile the young lady (unloved of Trotman, because she held fast by old Mr Binns) put aside, with a sigh, both the poem and her own poetic dreamings, and proved that her temper, however strong, was sweet and large and well controlled, by bridling her now closed lips from any peevish exclamation. She waited a little time until the glow of her cheeks abated, and the sparkle of her eyes was tranquil, and then she put her pretty hat on (deep brown, trimmed with plumes of puce), and thinking no more of herself than that, set forth to encounter her grandmother.

By this time Alice Lorraine had grown, from a sensitive spirited girl, into a sensitive spirited woman. The things which she used to think and feel to be right, she was growing to know to be right; and the fleeting of doubt from her face was beginning to form the soft expression. That is to say—if it can be described, and happily it never can be—goodwill, largeness of heart, rich mercy, sympathy, and quick tenderness combined with

grace and refinement, towards the perfection of womanly countenance.

So, whatever there was to be done, this Alice was always quite ready to do it. She had not those outlets for her active moods which young ladies have at the present day, who find or form an unknown quantity of most pressing duties. "Oh no, I have no time to marry anybody," they exclaim in a breathless manner; "if I did, I must either neglect my district, or my natural history."

Poor Alice had neither district, duck-weed net, nor even microscope; and what was even worse, she had no holy priest to guide her thoughts, no texts to work in moss and sago, nor even any croquet. Whatever she did, she had to do, without any rush of the feminine mind into masculine channels prepared for it; and even without any partnership of dear and good companions. So that the fight before her was to be fought out by herself alone.

This was the last quiet day of her life; the last day for thinking of little things; the last day of properly feeding her pets, her poultry, and tame hares, and pigeons, self-important robins (perching upon their own impudence), and sweetly trustful turtle-doves, that have no dream of evil. She fed them all; and if it were not her last day of feeding them, it was the last time she could feed them happily, and without envying their minds.

This was that important work, which she was bound to attend to, before she could hurry to the side of her grandmother. That fine old lady always made a point of sending, for Alice, whenever she knew her need—or rather, without knowing, needed the relief of a little explosion. Her dignity strictly barred this outlet towards those creatures of a lower creation, who had the bliss of serving her. To all such people she was most forbearing, in a

large and liberal style; because it must be so impossible for them at all to understand her. And, for this courteous manner, every woman in the place disliked her. The men, however, having slower perceptions, thought that her ladyship was quite right. They could make allowance for her—that they could; and after all, if you come to think of it, the "femmel" race was most aggravating. So they listened to what all the women had to tell; and without contradiction wisely let female opinion waste itself.

Lady Valeria Lorraine, though harassed and weakened by rheumatism and pain of the nerves (which she sternly attributed to the will of God and the weather), still sat as firmly erect as ever, and still exacted, by a glance alone, all those little attentions which she looked so worthy to receive. The further she became removed from the rising generation, the greater was the height of contempt from which she deigned to look down upon it. So that Alice used to say to her father sometimes, "I wonder whether I have any right to exist. Grandmamma seems to think it so impertinent of me." "One thing is certain," Sir Roland answered, with a quiet smile at his favourite; "and that is, that you cannot exist without impertinence, my dear."

This fine old lady was dressed with her usual taste and elaboration; no clumsy chits would she have to help her, during the three hours occupied by what she termed, not inaptly, her "devotions." She wore a maroon-coloured velvet gown of the softest and richest fabric, trimmed, not too profusely, with exquisite point-lace; while her cap, of the same lace with dove-coloured ribbon, at the same time set off and was surpassed by the beauty of her snow-white hair. Among many other small crotchets, she held that

brilliant did not suit a very old lady; and she wore no jewels, except a hoop of magnificent pearls with a turquoise setting, to preserve her ancient wedding-ring. And now, as her grandchild entered quietly, she was a little displeased at delay, and feigned to hear no entrance.

"Here I am, grandmamma, if you please," said Alice, after three most graceful curtsies, which she was always commanded to make, and made with much private amusement; "will you please to look round, grandmamma, and tell me what you want of me?"

"I could scarcely have dreamed," answered Lady Valeria, slowly turning towards her grandchild, and smiling with superior dignity; "that any member of our family would use the very words of the clown in the ring. But, perhaps, as I always try to think, you are more to be pitied than condemned. Partly through your own fault, and partly through peculiar circumstances, you have lost those advantages which a young lady of our house is entitled to. You have never been at Court; you have seen no society; you have never even been in London!"

"Alas! it is all too true, grandmamma. But how often have you told me that I never must hope, in this degenerate age, to find any good model to imitate! And you have always discouraged me, by presenting yourself as the only one for me to follow."

"You are quite right," said the ancient lady, failing to observe the turn of thought, as Alice was certain that she would do, else scarcely would she have ventured it; "but, you do not make the most of even that advantage. You can read and write, perhaps better than you ought, or better than used to be thought at all needful; but you

cannot come into a room, or make a tolerable curtsy; and you spend all your time with dogs, and poets, and barrows of manure, and little birds!"

"Now really, madam, you are too hard upon me. I may have had a barrow-load of poets; but more than a month ago, you gave orders that I was not to have one bit more of manure."

"Certainly I did, and high time it was. A young gentlewoman to dabble in worms, and stable-stuff, and filthiness! However, I did not send for you to speak about such little matters. What I have to say is for your own good; and I will trouble you not to be playing with your hands, but just to listen to me."

"I beg your pardon," said Alice, gently; "I did not know I was moving my hands. I will listen, without doing that any more."

"Now, my dear child," began Lady Valeria, being softened by the dutiful manner and sweet submission of the girl; "whatever we do is for your own good. You are not yet old enough to judge what things may profit, and what may hurt you. Even I, who had been brought up in a wholly superior manner, could not at your age have thought of anything. I was ready to be led by wiser people; although I had seen a good deal of the world. And you, who have seen nothing, must be only too glad to do the same. You know quite well, what has long been settled, between your dear father and myself, about what is to be done with you."

"To be done with me!" exclaimed poor Alice, despite her resolve to hold her tongue. "To be done with me! As if I were just a bundle of rags, to be got rid of!"

"Prouder and handsomer girls than you," answered Lady Valeria, quietly—for she loved to provoke

her grandchild, partly because it was so hard to do—"have become bundles of rags, by indulging just such a temper as yours is. You will now have the goodness to listen to me, without any vulgar excitement. Your marriage with Captain Chapman has for a very long time been agreed upon. It is high time now to appoint the day. Sir Remnant Chapman has done me the honour of a visit upon that subject. He is certainly a man of the true old kind; though his birth is comparatively recent. I was pleased with him; and I have pledged myself to the marriage, within three months from this day."

"It cannot be! it shall not be! You may bury me, but not marry me. Who gave you the right to sell me? And who made me to be sold? You selfish, cold-hearted—no, I beg your pardon. I know not what I am saying."

"You may well fall away, child, and cower like that; when you have dared to use such dreadful words. No, you may come to yourself, as you please. I am not going to give you any volatile salts, or ring, and make a scene of it. That is just what you would like; and to be petted afterwards. I hope you have not hurt yourself, so much as you have hurt me perhaps, by your violent want of self-control. I am not an old woman—as you were going to call me—but an elderly lady. And I have lived indeed to be too old, when any one descended from me has so little good blood in her, as to call her grandmother an old woman!"

"I am very, very sorry," said Alice, with catches of breath, as she spoke, and afraid to trust herself yet to rise from the chair, into which she had fallen; "I used no such words, that I can remember. But I spoke very rudely, I must confess. I scarcely know what I am to do,

when I hear such dreadful things, unless I bite my tongue off."

"I quite agree with you. And I believe it is the very best thing all young people can do. But I strive to make every allowance for you, because you have been so very badly brought up. Now come to this window, child, and look out. Tut, tut—tears indeed! What are young girls made of now? White sugar in a wet tea-cup. Now if the result of your violence allows you to see anything at all, perhaps you will tell me what that black line is among the rough ground at the bottom of the hill. To me it is perfectly clear, although I am such a very old woman."

"Why, of course, it is the Woe-burn, madam. It has been there for three days."

"You know what it means; and you calmly tell me that!"

"I know that it means harm, of course. But I really could not help its coming. And it has not done any harm as yet."

"No, Alice, it waits its due time, of course. Three months is its time, I believe, for running, before it destroys the family. Your marriage affords the only chance of retrieving the fortunes of this house, so as to defy disasters. Three months, therefore, is the longest time to which we can possibly defer it. How many times have we weakly allowed you to slip out of any certain day. But now we have settled that you must be Mrs Chapman by the 15th of January at the latest."

"Oh, grandmamma, to think that I ever should live to be called Mrs Chapman!"

"The name is a very good one, Alice, though it may not sound very romantic. But poor Sir Remnant, I fear, is unlikely to last for a great time longer. He seemed so bent, and his sight so bad, and requiring so much refreshment! And then,

of course, you would be Lady Chapman, if you care about such trifles."

"It is a piteous prospect, madam. And I think Captain Chapman must be older than his father. You know the old picture, 'The Downhill of Life;' the excellent and affectionate couple descending so nicely hand-in-hand. Well, I should illustrate that at once. I should have to lead my—no, I won't call him husband—but my tottering partner down the hill, whenever we came to see you and papa. Oh, that would be so interesting!"

"You silly child, you might do much worse than that. Lady de Lampnor has promised most kindly to see to your outfit in London. But I cannot talk of that at present. There, now you may go. I have told you all."

"Thank you, grandmamma. But, if you please, I have not told you all, nor half. It need not, however, take very long. It is just this. No power on earth shall ever compel me to marry Stephen Chapman; unless, indeed, it were so to happen——"

"You disobedient and defiant

creature—unless what should happen?"

"Unless the existence, and even the honour, of the Lorraines required it. But of that I see no possibility at all. At present it seems to be nothing more than a small and ignominious scheme. More and more I despise and dislike that heroic officer. I will not be sacrificed for nothing; and I have not the smallest intention of being the purchase-money for old acres."

"After that, I shall leave you to your father," answered Lady Valeria, growing tired. "It may amuse you to talk so largely, and perhaps for the moment relieves you. But your small self-will, and your childish fancies, cannot be always gratified. However, I will ask you one thing. If the honour, and even the life of Lorraine, can be shown to you to require it, will you sacrifice your noble self?"

"I will," answered Alice, with brave eyes flashing, and looking tall and noble. "If the honour of the Lorraines depends upon me, I will give myself and my life for it."

CHAPTER LVIII.

Hilary was so weak and weary, and so seriously ill, when at last he reached the rectory, that his uncle and aunt would not hear of his coming down-stairs for a couple of days at least. They saw that his best chance of escaping some long and perhaps fatal malady was to be found in rest and quietude, nursing, and kindly feeding. And the worst of it was that, whatever they did, they could not bring him to feed a quarter so kindly as he ought to do. The rector said, "Confound the fellow!" And Mrs Hales shook her head, and cried "Poor dear!" as dish after dish, and dainty little

plate, came out of his room untasted.

And now, on the morning of that same day on which Alice thus had pledged herself (being the third from her brother's arrival, of which she was wholly ignorant), the rector of West Lorraine arose, and girded himself, and ate his breakfast with no small excitement. He had received a new clerical vestment of the loftiest symbolism, and he hoped to exhibit it at the head of a very long procession.

"About poor Hilary? What am I to do?" asked Mrs Hales, coming into the lobby, to see her good

husband array himself. "All sorts of things may happen while you are away."

"Now, Caroline, how can you ask such a question? Feed, feed, feed; that's the line of treatment. And above all things, lock up your medicine-chest. He wants no squills, or scammony, or even your patent electuary—of all things the most abominable; though I am most ungrateful to call it so—for I owe to it half my burial-fees. He wants no murderous doctor's stuff; he wants a good breakfast—that's what he wants."

"But, my dear, you forget," answered good Mrs Hales, who kept a small wardrobe of bottles and pills, gallipots, powders, and little square scales; "you are quite overlooking the state of his tongue. He has not eaten the size of my little finger. Why? Why, because of the fur on his tongue!"

"Bless the boy's tongue, and yours too!" cried the rector. "I should not care twopence about his tongue, if he only used his teeth properly."

"Ah, Struan, Struan! those who have never known what ache or pain is, cannot hope to understand the system. I know exactly how to treat him—a course of gentle drastics first, and then three days of my electuary, and then cardamomum, exhibited with liquor potassay. Doctoring has always been in my dear mother's family; and when your time comes to be ill and weak, how often you will thank Providence!"

"I thank the Lord for all things," said the parson, who was often of a religious turn; "but I must be brought very low indeed, ere I thank Him for your electuary."

"Put on your new hunting-coat, my dear. There it hangs, and I know that you are dying to exhibit it.

The vanity of men surpasses even the love of women. There, there! You never will learn how to put a coat on. Just come to the hall-chair for me to pull it up. You are so unreasonably tall, that you never can get your coat up at the neck. Now, will you have it done, or will you go as you are, and look a regular figure in the saddle? You call it a 'bottle-green!' I call it a green, without the bottle."

"Caroline, sometimes you are most provoking. It is not your nature; but you try to do it. The cloth is of quite an invisible green, as the man in London told me—manufactured on purpose for ecclesiastics; though hundreds of parsons, God knows, go after the hounds in the good old scarlet. If you say any more, I will order a scarlet, and keep West Grinstead in countenance. They always do it in the west of England. In invisible green, I am a hypocrite."

"Now, don't excite yourself, Struan, or you won't enjoy your opening day at all. And I am sure that the green is as bright as can be; and you look very well—very well indeed. Though I don't quite see how you can button it. Perhaps it is meant for a button-hook, or a leather thong over your stomach, dear."

"It is meant to fit me, Mrs Hales; and it fits me to a nicety. It could not fit better; and it will be too easy when we have had a few hard runs. Where are my daughters? They know a good fit; and they know how to put a thing on my shoulders. Carry, Madge, and Cecil, come to the rescue of your father. Your father is baited, worse than any badger. Come all of you; don't stop a minute, or get perverted by your mother. Now, in simple truth, what do you say to this, my dears? Each speak her own opinion."

"It suits you most beautifully, papa."

"Papa, I think that I never saw you look a quarter so well before."

"My dear father, if there are any ladies, mamma will have reason to be jealous. But I fear that I see the back-seam starting."

"You clever little Cecil, I am afraid that it is. I feel a relief in front—ahem!—I mean an uncomfortable looseness in the chest. I told the fellow forty-eight inches at least. He has scamped the cloth, the London rascal! However, we can spare it from round the waist, as soon as our poor Cobble can see to it. But for to-day—ah yes, well thought of! My darling, go and get some of your green purse-silk. You are so handy. You can her-ring-bone it, so as to last for the day at least. Your mother will show you how to do it. Madge, tell Bonny to run and tell Robert not to bring the mare yet for a quarter of an hour. Now, ladies, I am at your mercy."

"Now, papa dear," asked Cecil, as she stitched away at the seam of her father's burly back, "if poor cousin Hilary should get up and want to go out, what are we to do?"

"How can you even put such a question? Even for our opening day, I would not dream of leaving the house, if I thought that you could be so stupid as to let that poor boy out. I would not have him seen in the parish, and I would not have his own people see him, even for the brush of the Fox-coombe fox, who is older than the hills, they say, and no hound dare go near him. One of you must be always handy; and if he gets restless, turn the key on him. Nothing can be simpler."

With his bottle-green coat, now warranted to last (unless he over-buttoned it), the rector kissed his

dear wife and daughters; and then universal good wishes, applauses, and kissings of hand, set him forth on his way, with a bright smile spread upon his healthy face.

"Now mind we are left in charge," said Madge. "You are his doctor, of course, mamma; but we are to be his constables. I hope to goodness that he will eat by-and-by. It makes me miserable to see him. And the trouble we have had to keep the servants from knowing who he is, mamma!"

"My dear, your father has ordered it so. For my part, I cannot see why there should be so much mystery about it. But he always knows better than we do, of course."

"Surely, mamma," suggested Cecil, "it would be a dreadful shock to the family to receive poor Hilary in such a condition, just after the appearance of that horrid water. They would put the two things together, and believe it the beginning of great calamities."

"Now, my dear child," answered Mrs Hales, who loved to speak a word in season, "let not us, who are Christians, hearken to such superstitious vanities. Trust in the Lord, and all will be well. He hold-eth in the hollow of His hands the earth and all that therein is; yea, and the waters that be under the earth. Now run up, and see whether your poor cousin has eaten that morsel of anchovy toast. And tell him that I am going to prepare his draught, but he must not take the pills until half-past eleven."

"Oh, mamma dear, you'll drive him out of the house. Poor fellow, how I do pity him!"

Now Hilary certainly deserved this pity—not for his bodily ailments only, and the cruel fate which had placed him at the mercy of the medicine-chest, but more especially for the low and feverish condition of his heart and mind. Brooding perpetu-

ally on his disgrace, and attributing to himself more blame than his folly and failure demanded, he lost the refreshment of dreamless sleep, which his jaded body called out for. No rest could he find in the comforting words of his uncle and aunt and cousins: he knew that they were meant for comfort, and such knowledge vexes; or at least it irritates a man, until the broader time of life, when things are taken as they are meant, and any good word is welcome.

He was not, however, so very far gone as to swallow his dear aunt's boluses. He allowed his pillow to take his pills; and his good-natured cousins let him swallow them, as much as a juggler swallows swords. "I can't take them while you are looking," he said; "when you come in again you will find them gone."

Now one of the girls—it was never known which, because all three denied it—stupidly let the sick cousin know that the master of the house was absent. Hilary paid no special heed at the moment when he heard it; but after a while he began to perceive (as behoved a blockaded soldier) that here was his chance for a sally. And he told them so, after his gravy-beef and a raw egg beaten up with sherry.

"How cunning you are now!" said Cecil, who liked and admired him very deeply. "But you are not quite equal, Master Captain, to female ingenuity. The Spanish ladies must have taught you that, if half that I hear is true of them. Now you need not look so wretched, because I know nothing about them. Only this I know, that out of this house you are not allowed to go, without—oh, what do you call it?—a pass, or a watchword, or a counter-sign, or something or other from papa himself. So you may just as well lie down—or mamma will come up with a powder for you."

"The will of the Lord be done," said Hilary; "but, Cecil, you are getting very pretty, and you need not take away my breeches."

"I am sorry to do it, Cousin Hilary; but I know quite well what I am about. And none of your military ways of going on can mislead me as to your character. You want to be off. We are quite aware of it. You can scarcely put two feet to the ground."

"Oh dear, how many ought I to be able to put?"

"You know best—at least four, I should hope. But you are not equal to argument. And we are all particularly ordered to keep you from what is too much for you. Now I shall take away these things—whatever they are called, I have no idea; but I do what I am told to do. And after this you will take that glass of the red wine, declared to be wonderful; and then you will shut both your eyes, if you please, till my father comes home from his hunting."

The lively girl departed with a bow of light defiance, carrying away her father's small-clothes (which had been left for Hilary), and locking the door of his bedroom with a decisive turn of a heavy key. "Mother, you may go to sleep," she said, as she ran down into the drawing-room: "I defy him to go, if he were Jack Sheppard: he has got no breeches to go in."

"Cecil, you are almost too clever! How your father will laugh, to be sure!" And the excellent lady began her nap.

As the afternoon wore away, Hilary grew more and more impatient of his long confinement. Not only that he pined for the open air—as, of course, he must do, after living so long with the free sky for his canopy—but also that he felt most miserable at being so near the old house on the hill, yet doubtful of his

reception there. More than once he rang the bell; but the old nurse, who alone of the servants was allowed to enter, would do no more than scold or coax him, and quietly lock him in again. So at last he got out of bed, and feebly made his way to the window, and thence beheld, betwixt him and the grassy mounds of the churchyard, that swift black stream which had so surprised him on the night of his arrival.

Since then he had persuaded himself, or allowed others to persuade him, that the water had been a vision only of his weak and excited brain. But now he saw it clearly, calmly, and in a very few moments knew what it was, and of what dark import.

"How can I have let them keep me here?" he exclaimed, with indignation. "My father and sister must believe me dead, while I play at this miserable hide-and-seek. Perhaps they will think that I had better have been dead; but, at any rate, they shall know the truth."

With these words he took up his sailor-clothes, which the vigilant Cecil had overlooked, and which had been left in his room for fear of setting the servants talking; and he dressed himself as well as he could, and tried to look clean and tidy. But do what he might, he could only cut a poor and sorry figure; and looking in the glass, he was frightened at his wan and worn appearance. Then, knowing the habits of the house, and wishing to avoid excitement, he waited until the two elder daughters were gone down the village for their gossip, and Cecil was seeing the potatoes dug, and Mrs Hales sleeping over Fisher or Patrick, while the cook was just putting the dinner down; and then, without trying the door at all, he quietly descended from the window, with the help of a stack-pipe and a spurry pear-tree.

So feeble was he now, that this slight exertion made him turn faint, and sick, and giddy; and he was obliged to sit down and rest under a shrub, into which he had staggered. But after a while, he found himself getting a little better; and pulling up one of the dahlia-stakes, to help himself along with, he made his way to the gate; and there being cut off from the proper road, followed the leave of the land and the water, along the valley upward.

Alice Lorraine had permitted herself, not quite to lose her temper, but still to get a little worried by her grandmother's exhortations. Of all living beings, she felt herself to be one of the very most reasonable; and whenever she began to doubt about it, she knew there was something wrong with her. Her favourite cure for this state of mind was a free and independent ride, over the hills and far away. She hated to have a groom behind her, watching her, and perhaps criticising the movements of her figure. But as it was scarcely the proper thing for Miss Lorraine to be scouring the country, like a yeoman's daughter, she always had to start with a trusty groom; but she generally managed to get rid of him.

And now, having vainly coaxed her father to come for a breezy canter, Alice set forth about four o'clock, for an hour of rapid air, to clear, invigorate, and enliven her. Whatever she did, or failed of doing (when her grandmother was too much for her), she always looked graceful, and bright, and kind. But she never looked better than when she was sitting, beautifully straight, on her favourite mare, skimming the sward of the hills; or bowing her head in some tangled covert. This day, she allowed the groom to chase her (like the black

care that sits behind) until she had taken free burst of the hills, and longed to see things quietly. And then she sent him, in the kindest manner, to a very old woman at Lower Chancton, to ask whether she had been frightened; and when he had turned the corner of a difficult plantation, Alice took her course for that which she had made up her mind to do.

According to the ancient stories, no fair-blooded creatures (such as man, or horse, cow, dog, or pigeon) would ever put lip to the accursed stream; whereas all foul things, polecats, foxes, fitches, badgers, ravens, and the like, were drawn by it, as by a loadstone, and made a feasting-place of it. So Alice resolved that her darling "Elfrida" should be compelled to pant with thirst, and then should have the fairest offer of the water of the Woe-burn. And of this intent she was so full, that she paid no heed to the "dressing bell," clanging over the lonely hill, nor even to her pet mare's sense of dinner; but took a short cut of her own knowledge, down a lonely bostall, to the channel of new waters.

The stream had risen greatly even since the day before yesterday, and now in full volume swept on grandly towards the river Adur. Any one who might chance to see it for the first time, and without any impression, or even idea concerning it, could scarcely fail to observe how it differed from ordinary waters. Not only through its pellucid blackness, and the swaying of long grass under it (whose every stalk, and sheath, and awn, and even empty glume, was clear, as they quivered, wavered, severed, and spread, or sheathed themselves together again, and hustled in their common immersion),—not only in this, and the absence of any water-plants along its margin, was the stream peculiar,

but also in its force and flow. It did not lip, or lap, or ripple, or gurgle, or wimple, or even murmur, as all well-meaning rivers do; but swept on in one even sweep, with a face as smooth as the best plate-glass, and the silent slide of night-fall.

Now the truth of the good old saying was made evident to Alice, that one can take a horse to water, but a score cannot make him drink, unless he is so minded. It was not an easy thing to get Elfrida to go near the water. She started away with flashing eyes, pricked ears, and snorting nostrils; and nothing but her perfect faith in Alice would have made her come nigh. But as for drinking, or even wetting her nose in that black liquid—might the horse-fiend seize her, if she dreamed of doing a thing so dark and unholy!

"You shall, you shall, you wicked little witch!" cried Alice, who was often obstinate. "I mean to drink it; and you shall drink it; and we won't have any superstition." She leaped off lightly, with her skirt tucked up, and taking the mare by the cheek-piece of the bridle, drew her forward. "Come along, come along, you shall drink. If you don't, I'll pour it up your nostrils, Frida; somehow or other, you shall swallow it. You know I won't have any nonsense, don't you?"

The beautiful filly, with great eyes partly defiant and partly suppliant, drew back her straight nose, and blowing nostrils, and the glistening curve of the foamy lip. Not even a hair of her muzzle should touch the face of the accursed water.

"Very well then, you shall have it thus," cried Alice, with her curved palm brimming with the unpopular liquid; when suddenly a shadow fell on the shadowy brilli-

ance before her—a shadow distinct from her own and Elfrida's, and cast further into the wavering.

"Who are you?" cried Alice, turning sharply round; "and what business have you on my father's land?" She was in the greatest fright at the sudden appearance of a foreign sailor, and the place so lonely and beyond all help; but without thinking twice, she put a brave face on her terror.

"Who am I?" said Hilary, trying to get up a sprightly laugh. "Well, I think you must have seen me once or twice in the course of your long life, Miss Lorraine."

"Oh, Hilary, Hilary, Hilary!"

She threw herself into his arms with a jump, relying upon his accustomed strength, and without any thought of the difference. He tottered backwards, and must have fallen, but for the trunk of a polar ash. And seeing how it was, she again cried out, "Oh, Hilary, Hilary, Hilary!"

"That is my name," he answered, after kissing her in a timid manner; "but not my nature; at the present moment I am not so very hilarious."

"Why, you are not fit to walk, or talk, or even to look like a hero. You are the bravest fellow that ever was born. Oh, how proud we are of you! My darling, what is the matter? Why, you look as if you did not know me! Help, help, help! He is going to die. Oh, for God's sake, help!"

Poor Hilary, after looking wildly around, and trying in vain to command his mouth, fell suddenly back, convulsed, distorted, writhing, foaming, and wallowing in the depths of epilepsy. Sky, hill, and tree swung to and fro, across his strained and starting eyes, and then whirled round like a spinning-wheel, with radiating sparks and spots. Then all fell into abyss of

darkness, down a bottomless pit, into utter and awful loss of everything.

The vigour of youth had fought against this robbery of humanity so long and hard that Alice, the only spectator of the conflict, began to recover from shriek and wailing by the time that her brother fell into the black insensibility. The ground sloped so that if she had not been there, the unfortunate youth must have rolled into the Woeburn, and so ended. But being a prompt and active girl, she had saved him from this at any rate. She had had the wit also to save his tongue, by slipping a glove between his teeth; which scarcely a girl in a hundred who saw such a thing for the first time would have done. And now, though her face was bathed in tears, and her hands almost as tremulous as if themselves convulsed, she filled her low-crowned riding-hat with water from the river, and sprinkled his forehead gently, and released his neck from cumbrance. And then she gazed into his thin pale features, and listened for the beating of his heart.

This was so low that she could not hear or even feel it anywhere. "Oh, how can I get him home?" she cried. "Oh, my only brother, my only brother!" In fright and misery, she leaped upon a crest of chalk, to seek around for any one to help her; and suddenly she espied her groom against the skyline a long way off, galloping up the ridge from Chancton. In hope that one of the many echoes of the cliffs might aid her, she shrieked with all her power, and tore a white kerchief from under her riding-habit, and put it on her whip and waved it. And presently she had the joy of seeing the horse's head turned towards her. The rider had not caught her voice, but had descried some white thing fluttering between

him and the sombre stripe which he was watching earnestly.

This groom was a strong and hearty man, and the father of seven children. He made the best of the case, and ventured to comfort his young mistress. And then he laid Hilary upon Elfrida, the docile and soft-stepper; and making him fast

with his own bridle, and other quick contrivances, he tethered his own horse to a tree, and leading the mare, set off with Alice walking carefully and supporting the head of her senseless brother. So came this hero, after all his exploits, back to the home of his fathers.

CHAPTER LIX.

"What can I do? Oh, how can I escape?" cried Alice to herself one morning, towards the end of the dreary November; "one month out of three is gone already, and the chain of my misery tightens round me. No, don't come near me, any of you birds; you will have to do without me soon; and you had better begin to practise. Ah me! you can make your own nests, and choose your mates; how I envy you! Well, then, if you must be fed, you must. Why should I be so selfish?" With tears in her eyes, she went to her bower and got her little basket of moss, well known to every cock-robin and thrush and blackbird dwelling on the premises. At the bottom were stored, in happy ignorance of the fate before them, all the delicacies of the season—the food of woodland song, the stimulants of aerial melody. Here were woodlice, beetles, earwigs, caterpillars, slugs and nymphs, well-girt brandlings, and the offspring of the tightly-buckled wasp, together with the luscious meal-worm, and the peculiarly delicious grub of the cockchafer—all as fresh as a West-end salmon, and savouring sweetly of moss and milk—no wonder the beaks of the birds began to water at the mere sight of that basket.

"You have had enough now for to-day," said Alice; "it is useless

to put all your heads on one side, and pretend that you are just beginning. I know all your tricks quite well by this time. No, not even you, you Methusalem of a Bob, can have any more—or at least, not much."

For this robin (her old pet of all, and through whose powers of interpretation the rest had become so intimate) made a point of perching upon her collar and nibbling at her ear whenever he felt himself neglected. "There is no friend like an old friend," was his motto; and his poll was grey and his beak quite blunted with the cares of age, and his large black eyes were fading. "Methusalem, come and help yourself," said Alice, relenting, softly; "you will not have the chance much longer."

Now as soon as the birds, with a chirp and a jerk, and one or two futile hops, had realised the stern fact that there was no more for them, and then had made off to their divers business (but all with an eye to come back again), Alice, with a smiling sigh—if there can be such a mixture—left her pets, and set off alone to have a good walk and talk and think. The birds, being guilty of "cupboard love," were content to remain in their trees and digest; and as many of them as were in voice expressed their gratitude brilliantly. But out

of the cover they would not budge ; they hated to be ruffled up under their tails : and they knew what the wind on the Downs was.

"I shall march off straight for Chancton Ring," said Alice Lorraine, most resolutely. "How thankful I am, to be able to walk ! and poor Hilary—ah, how selfish of me to contrast my state with his !"

Briskly she mounted the crest of the coombe, and passed to the open upland, the long chine of hill which trends to its highest prominence at Chancton Ring—a landmark for many a league around. Crossing the trench of the Celtic camp—a very small obstruction now—which loosely girds the ancient trees, Alice entered the venerable throng of weather-beaten and fantastic trunks. These are of no great size, and shed no impress of hushed awe, as do the mossy ramparts and columnar majesty of New-forest beech-trees. Yet, from their countless and furious struggles with the winds in their might in the wild midnight, and from their contempt of aid or pity in their bitter loneliness, they enforce the respect and the interest of any who sit beneath them.

At the foot of one of the largest trees, the perplexed and disconsolate Alice rested on a lowly mound, which held (if faith was in tradition) the bones of her famous ancestor, the astrologer Agasicles. The tree which overhung his grave, perhaps as a sapling had served to rest without obstructing his telescope ; and the boughs, whose murmurings soothed his sleep, had been little twigs too limp for him to hang his Samian cloak on. Now his descendant in the ninth or tenth generation—whichever it was—had always been endowed with due (but mainly rare) respect for those who must have gone before her. She could not perceive that they must

have been fools, because many things had happened since they died ; and she was not even aware that they must have been rogues to beget such a set of rogues.

Therefore she had veneration for the remains that lay beneath her (mouldering in no ugly coffin, but in swaddling-clothes committed like an infant into the mother's bosom), and the young woman dwelt, as all mortals must, on death, when duly put to them. The everlasting sorrow of the moving winds—as in the trees ; and the rustling of the sad, sear leaf, and creaking of the lichened bough. And above their little bustle and small fuss about themselves, the large, sonorous stir was heard of Weymouth pines and Scottish firs swaying in the distance slowly, like the murmur of the sea. Even the waving of yellow grass-blades (where the trees allowed them), and the rustling of tufted briars, and of thorny thickets, shone and sounded melancholy with a farewell voice and gaze.

In the midst of all this autumn, Alice felt her spirits fall. She knew that they were low before, and she was here to enlarge and lift them, with the breadth of boundless prospect and the height of the breezy hill. But fog and cloud came down the weald, and grey encroachment creeping, and on the hill-tops lay heavy sense of desolation. And Alice being at heart in union with the things around her (although she tried to be so brave), began to be weighed down, and lonesome, sad, and wondering, and afraid. From time to time she glanced between the uncouth pillars of the trees, to try to be sure of no man being in among them hiding. And every time when she saw no one, she was so glad that she need not look again—and then she looked again.

"It is quite early," she said to

herself; "nothing—not even three o'clock. I get into the stupidest, fearfulest ways from such continual nursing. How I wish poor Hilary was here! One hour of this fine breeze and cheerful scene—— My goodness, what was that!"

The cracking of a twig, without any sign of what had cracked it; the rustle of trodden leaves; but no one, in and out the graves of leafage, visible to trample them. And then the sound of something waving, and a sharp snap as of metal, and a shout into the distant valley.

"It is the astrologer," thought Alice. "Oh, why did I laugh at him? He has felt me sitting upon his skull. He is waving his cloak, and snapping his casket. He has had me in view for his victim always, and now he is shouting for me."

In confirmation of this opinion, a tall grey form, with one arm thrown up, and a long cloak hanging gracefully, came suddenly gliding between the trees. The maiden, whose brain had been overwrought, tried to spring up with her usual vigour; but the power failed her. She fell back against the sepulchral trunk and did not faint, but seemed for the moment very much disposed thereto.

When she was perfectly sure of herself, and rid of all presence of spectres, she found a strong arm behind her head, and somebody leaning over her. And she laid both hands before her face, without meaning any rudeness; having never been used to be handled at all, except by her brother or father.

"I beg your pardon most humbly, madam. But I was afraid of your knocking yourself."

"Sir, I thank you. I was very foolish. But now I am quite well again."

"Will you take my hand to get

up? I am sure, I was scared as much as you were."

"Now, if I could only believe that," said Alice, "my self-respect would soon return; for you do not seem likely to be frightened very easily."

She was blushing already, and now her confusion deepened, with the consciousness that the stranger might suppose her to be admiring his manly figure; of which, of course, she had not been thinking, even for one moment.

"I ought not to be so," he answered in the simplest manner possible; "but I had a sunstroke in America, fifteen months ago or so; and since that I have been good for nothing. May I tell you who I am?"

"Oh yes, I should like so much to know." Alice was surprised at herself as she spoke; but the stranger's unusually simple yet most courteous manner led her on.

"I am one Joyce Aylmer, not very well known; though at one time I hoped to become so. A major in his Majesty's service"—here he lifted his hat and bowed—"but on the sick-list ever since we fought the Americans at Fort Detroit."

"Oh, Major Aylmer, I have often heard of you, and how you fell into a sad brain-fever, through saving the life of a poor little child. My uncle, Mr Hales, knows you, I believe, and has known your father for many years."

"That is so. And I am almost sure that I must be talking to Miss Lorraine, the daughter of Sir Roland Lorraine, whom my father has often wished to know."

"Yes. And perhaps you know my brother, who has served in the Peninsula, and is now lying very ill at home."

"I am sorry indeed to hear that of him. I know him, of course, by

reputation, as the hero of Badajos ; but I think I was ordered across the Atlantic before he joined ; or, at any rate, I never met him that I know of—though I shall hope to do so soon. May I see you across this lonely hill ? Having frightened you so, I may claim the right to prevent any others from doing it.”

Alice would have declined the escort of any other stranger ; but she had heard such noble stories of this Major Aylmer, and felt such pity for a brave career baffled by its own bravery (which in some degree resembled her poor brother's fortunes), that she gave him one of her soft bright smiles, such a smile as he never had received before. Therefore he set down his broad sketch-book, and the case of pencils, and went to the rim of the Ring that looks towards the vale of Sus-

sex ; and there he shouted, to countermand the groom, who had been waiting for him at the farm house far below.

“I am ordered to ride about,” he said, as he returned to Alice, “and to be out of doors all day—a very pleasant medicine. And so, for something to do, I have taken up my old trick of drawing ; because I must not follow hounds. I would not talk so about myself, except to show you how it was that you did not hear me moving.”

“How soon it gets dark on the top of these hills !” cried Alice, most unscientifically. “I always believe that they feel it sooner, because they see the sun go down.”

“That seems to me to be a fine idea,” Joyce Aylmer answered, faithfully. And his mind was in a loose condition of reason all the way to Coombe Lorraine.

POLITICS AT HOME AND ABROAD.

THE first thing suggested by the reassembling of Parliament is the feeling that for all time a repetition of the *coup d'état* of last year has been rendered impossible. Its condemnation by the country was too pronounced, its consequences too momentous, for any political chief, however confident in himself or in the assumed approval of the public, to revert to an expedient so perilous and so utterly unjustifiable. The party of sensation being out of office, we have, in consequence, no fear of a policy of surprise, and no apprehension of any manœuvres akin to that of an Ashantee ambush. Accordingly, we take it for granted that Parliament will meet in due course; and we proceed to make a few observations upon that event by way of reviewing the present political situation, without any misgiving lest before these pages meet the public eye the whole scene will have been changed by a fit of ungovernable rashness, and in a manner which confounds all speculation whether of friends or foes.

The events of last session are a subject which is now worn threadbare, and few of our readers would thank us for renewing it. The events of next session, as Mr Disraeli said at the Mansion-House, will form an exciting topic of discussion some months hence. Pending the Queen's Speech and the opening of Parliament, there is no doubt a lull in the English political world. We are at the close of a Parliamentary recess which has not been fruitful of incident, which has been remarkable for tranquillity and contentment, and from which everything in the shape of serious agitation has been banished. It has been a time when some of our most familiar

friends, whose advanced opinions are their sole title to distinction, have been drowned in a sodden political slumber. It has also been a period when the English people, as they contrast their own position with that of neighbouring nations, feel that they have achieved a brilliant political position, threatened by nothing worse than the discordant sects, who feebly echo the worst passions and opinions of the Continent, and who have been crushed without an effort.

The re-establishment of a system which, whether it is described as that of modern Conservatism or historic Toryism, at least receives from its more distinguished opponents the unconscious flattery of an open avowal of its most sacred principles, is not likely to have occurred without largely influencing the politics of the world. Or if the phrase be preferred, the political changes in England have been accompanied by similar changes abroad, all of them, perhaps, referable to the same causes, and likely, we trust, to lead to the greater security, progress, and happiness of mankind. The Legislatures of three of these countries—France, Germany, and America—have recently commenced their labours, and it is perhaps a fitting opportunity of comparing their position with our own. In all of them we think that the prospects are more satisfactory and encouraging than could have been reasonably expected a very few years ago. The terrible wars of which Europe has been the scene,—the prolonged disorder and confusion from which France and Spain have suffered—the downfall of so many kingdoms and institutions,—have impressed upon mankind the perils of revolu-

tionary anarchy, and have spread the conviction that no nation can part with impunity with its ancient institutions, which began with its birth, and have grown with its growth, however difficult and necessary it may be to place them in accord with the spirit and circumstances of the present. Those violent breaches with the past which commend themselves to the rash and adventurous, cost statesmen many an anxious life, and nations many an arduous struggle, in the endeavour to heal them; and we may be thankful that our fate has hitherto been so ordered that our unbroken historic continuity at once arrests the attention, and excites the admiration, of rulers ardently desirous of restoring to their countries the benefits of social order and established government.

The serenity of the political atmosphere in England contrasts most forcibly with the still unpacified state of Europe. Order, liberty, and religion are the three principles which the old world is still striving unsuccessfully to accomplish, and which England, as the leader of the new world, holds out for the example and encouragement of mankind. These are the three great ends which every nation or community places in view, and strives to attain; but Latin and Teutonic races alike are constantly baffled in the pursuit of them. At the present moment those ends are certainly not reached by Continental nations. Blood and iron have been expended with a lavish hand; Germany, France, and Spain have been decimated by war: but no force which man can bring into operation will achieve those results which the steady continuous growth of national character and habits alone can produce. Those who are sceptical as to the advantages of an historic throne and dynasty as a means of preserv-

ing public order—who deride the great Tory doctrine of connecting political privilege with the performance of public duty—who undervalue those relations between Church and State which have for two centuries combined the maintenance of a religious spirit with the progress of religious liberty,—may derive a lesson from what is now passing abroad. They will find in one gallant and unfortunate people an example of the disastrous consequences of attempting to found society on the rights of man; in another, they will find how, after years of anarchy, and discord, and impending bankruptcy, a people in despair reverts to its hereditary throne, even though it must be filled by an inexperienced youth; and in a third, they will find that while an organised Church bids defiance to the State, the people are gradually rejecting all healthy religious influence.

It is difficult to resist the temptation to indulge in some self-congratulation, when the opening of our own Parliament reminds us how far removed our own position is from the perplexity and menacing circumstances under which the German and French Governments have met their Legislatures, and from the condition of gloomy disturbance through which Spain sees a gleam of hope in the return of its native prince. Whatever the causes—whether we owe it to our insular security, and the national spirit and sense, or the exceptional good fortune which through history has been with us at every crisis, or to all combined—every one admits that the country is contented, tranquil, and prosperous; and that the stormy contentions which rage abroad and imperil the fortunes of every people, only present themselves to these islands in a mitigated form, sufficiently pressing to command atten-

tion and excite controversy, but not in a form to render their solution a matter of grave peril or overwhelming anxiety. There is no sort of counterpart here to the political confusion which prevails in France and Spain: the most dangerous politicians are paralysed by lethargy of mind and body; while the deadly strife between Prince Bismark and his Ultramontane bishops appears in England in the attenuated form of a pamphlet, in which the ex-Liberal leader explains to a considerable portion of his former supporters that with their principles they cannot at the same time be both logical and loyal. A more harmless discussion, when compared with the ecclesiastical strife abroad, it is impossible to imagine. We are not a logical people; and we have no doubt that whatever extravagances the Catholics or Radicals may commit themselves to in theory, in writing, or on platforms, when it comes to action and to putting in force their supposed convictions, patriotism and common-sense will regain their usual ascendancy in this country, and the leopards will not merely change but forget even the existence of their spots.

It is a singular circumstance, perhaps one of the most striking which have occurred during the recess, that the prostration of unreflecting Liberalism, originally effected by the excesses of the French Commune, has extended to the American continent. The elections last autumn in that country were attended by a very similar result to that which we witnessed in England at the beginning of the year. The Republicans were defeated as thoroughly as the Liberals in England; and a majority of one hundred in their favour was converted into a minority of half that amount. For fourteen years they have held power, with the result, whatever their

virtues or achievements, that the majority of the electors throughout the Union have become thoroughly discontented. The American Liberals have been demoralised by a too protracted ascendancy. Crotchets-mongers, as they are termed, have come to the front with their disintegrating and baneful influence, and the general result of Republican administration has been that public frauds and misgovernment have destroyed all faith in public virtue, and that, according to their good friend the 'Spectator,' "an undue proportion of rascals of all colours have been enabled to get to the top." American politics were ripe for a total change, and it would have been well if the machinery existed for effecting it as speedily and as thoroughly as amongst ourselves. Scarcely anything can be more injurious in public affairs than the dead lock which is produced in a republic, or under any system other than a constitutional monarchy, when the people resolve upon a complete change of front and policy. A transference of power is effected in this country with the utmost ease, without any abrupt transition or any inconvenient disturbance of the due course of administration. For an interval of more than two years, the only hope for America that her Executive and her Legislature will be in accord is, that the two rival parties in the State—one exasperated by long exclusion from power, the other at the prospect of losing it—may exhibit mutual forbearance and moderation. The Democrats have a decided majority in the new House of Representatives, and will be virtually supreme in matters of legislation. The President, supported by a very small majority in the Senate, is Republican. A more inconvenient arrangement—one less likely to produce good government or wise legislation, or to insure the

prudent exercise of that great and increasing power which America wields—it is difficult to conceive. French Republicanism has recently added new horrors to the past associations of the term; Spanish Republicanism has proved a byword of feebleness and incapacity; and in America the same form of Government offers itself as a complicated and ingenious mechanism, which, in seeking to restrain or hinder popular excesses, inflicts a period of paralysis on the country, and places the reins of authority in rival hands, each much more intent upon baffling the other, than desirous or able to interpret and fulfil the national will. The exact position is this. The President cannot be unseated till March 1877, but he is practically discredited. The House of Representatives, from its meeting at the beginning of December till March 1875, continues to possess a Republican majority, not yet unseated, who well know that those few months are, for the present, their last months of power. Although the Senate only possesses a small Republican majority, there is a probability, though still an uncertainty, of it too falling, in due course, into the hands of the Democratic majority. Where, under such circumstances of present confusion and uncertain contingencies, is the security for good government, and its continuous administration? As the London *'Times'* remarked—"There have been Governments and Legislatures which would seize upon the remaining hours at their disposal to impress their will on the nation, even though the control over its destinies was about to be taken from them. If the United States were as France, the President, Senate, and House of Representatives would hasten to tie up everything as tightly as possible, knowing that if President and House are to pass away, the

majority of the Senate will remain some time longer Republican, and could prevent a new President and a new House from undoing what the outgoing authorities had conspired to do." The only force or break interposed between American affairs and the dead lock which would otherwise await them, is a feeling which is to some extent akin to the feeling of loyalty to an established throne, and which results from habit and tradition—namely, the sentiment of obedience to the popular will. If a republic is more than a century old, and has been planted as it were on a virgin soil, the force of traditional sentiment has had place to take root in it and time to grow. Such an experiment may succeed in a new country; but the chance of the true republican sentiment, which is essential to the working of republican institutions, taking root in a monarchical soil, is infinitesimal; and the demoralising effects of insane attempts to force the spread of uncongenial institutions were never more strikingly displayed than recently in France, in the total inability of an experienced public servant like Marshal Bazaine to draw the line between rank treason to the State, and hostility to the form of government which temporarily held the reins of power. In America, republicanism is seen under its most favourable circumstances: boundless territory, the absence of all the traditionary sentiments which grow up round a throne, and of an aristocracy which is both hereditary and famous, and a long-established deference to the popular will. Any one who compares the spectacle of President Grant meeting the American Congress last December with Queen Victoria meeting her Parliament this February—each under the circumstances of the nation having recently effected a transference of power from one

party to the other—must feel that the people which live under the sway of a limited and constitutional monarchy have infinitely greater security for order and good government, and the continuous working of the machinery of administration, than those who live under the most peaceful and perfect form of republican government ever devised. Constant changes in the form of government appear to deaden loyalty, weaken patriotism, and demoralise the public services. It is absurd to undervalue the advantages of the symbol and centre of a State remaining fixed and inviolable.

The German Emperor met his Parliament on the 29th of October. Although French affairs interest the majority of Englishmen more than those of any other European power, still the proceedings of the German Parliament, and its relations to the Imperial Government, are of more immediate and primary importance both to Europe and ourselves. This country has shown its sympathy with France in its unparalleled disasters, and has not stinted its admiration for the gallant manner in which she has confronted them. The Duc Decazes administers the foreign affairs of his country in a way which inspires Europe with confidence in his sagacity and prudence. And the appointment of the present French ambassador in London may be regarded as a friendly move towards the present Administration. But we cannot forget the celebrated saying of Napoleon, "When France is satisfied, Europe is at peace." The satisfaction of France, and therefore the peace of Europe, depend at the present moment mainly upon the circumstances that France is comparatively powerless, and that Germany for the present is exceedingly strong. If the alternative were to present itself, whether Germany should relapse into being what a

celebrated English statesman called a mere geographical expression, or whether it should remain as now, a strong military and united empire, there cannot be a doubt which would be most in the interests of European peace and English contentment. It is unnecessary to recall the correspondence published at the commencement of the last war, which disclosed the designs of Napoleon upon Belgium. In the recent correspondence revealed in the proceedings at Count Arnim's trial, there is this ominous passage attributed to M. Thiers whilst President of the Republic, in conversation reported by Count Arnim: "Of course, a time may come when France will have recovered from her misfortunes, and when Germany in her turn will be involved in difficulties. At such a juncture, France might endeavour to square accounts with Germany; but even this need not lead to war, as France, far from being an implacable enemy, would be sure to ally herself with Germany in the eleventh hour, provided Germany were to accord her a *compensation for recent losses*." If this again points to Belgium, as we presume that it does, sympathy with France must be tempered by some of that cynical selfishness or prudent regard for the main chance, whichever it may be called, which so ruthlessly pervades the whole of Prince Bismark's despatches.

The opening of the German Parliament was full of that interest which a political situation of extreme difficulty and even peril is sure to excite. The iron hand which united Germany will not, or cannot, release its grasp. In all that he says and does, Prince Bismark seems to show that he considers his authority to rest upon sheer physical force and mastery of will. What will become of the Empire without the Chancellor, is a speculation which the

future will solve. The visible union of the Germanic States is preserved under his despotic hand ; but the rancour and animosities which are scattered far and wide around him, scarcely do credit to Prince Bismark's statesmanship and capacity for government. It was inevitable that the new Empire should be surrounded by implacable foes : it was founded upon the ruins of its neighbours. But the same angry and incurable animosities are excited within as well as without the heterogeneous community which now acknowledges the sway of the German Emperor ; and apparently they are all centred upon the same devoted head, which does not preserve that steadiness of temper and power of self-control which the crisis demands. The measures announced from the throne were weighty and important. A code of civil procedure for the whole Empire ; the vast re-organisation of the enormous military system, together with the provisions for calling out the Land-sturm in time of peace ; and the measures for the government of Alsace and Lorraine, together with the projected legislation concerning civil marriage,—are large demands upon the vigour and capacity of the new Empire ; and some spirit of conciliation, some approximation to the tone and temper which an English House of Commons expects at the hands of its leader, might have been at least as efficacious an instrument as the sledge-hammer violence with which the German Chancellor invariably seeks to effect his purposes. At the beginning of last year there were ominous forebodings of another war with France, because of some pastoral letters issued by French bishops. Later on, the murder of Captain Schmidt by the Carlists led to the intervention of Germany in the affairs of Spain. "We should have

been perfectly justified," said the Chancellor, "from an international point of view, and we should only have treated those butchers according to their deserts, had we landed in Spain, captured some Carlist officer or other, and hung him up on the sea-shore." The same high-handed tone, more fitted to sustain or exhibit the supremacy of the individual, than to assist in laying the foundation of a lasting system of government for a recently united but still heterogeneous empire, has been displayed on more than one occasion since the opening of the Parliament. If, as has been said by their great philosopher Fichte, the commonwealth of United Germany can only be established upon a basis of personal and intellectual liberty, some more conciliatory policy would seem to be required than is suited to the combative and overbearing temper of Prince Bismark. Europe will be slow to forget the extraordinary scene in which he endeavoured to fix upon the Centre Party a complicity in the guilt of the assassin Kullman. "Discard the man as much as you like, he is hanging on to your coat-tails nevertheless." The retort of Herr Windhorst was equally bad, to the effect that if religious excitement drove people to crime, those who caused the excitement had only themselves to thank for it. We should lose all our pride in the House of Commons if it even condescended, under any circumstances, to permit charges of complicity in the guilt of assassination to be bandied backwards and forwards on its benches ; and we should lose all confidence in the leader under whose auspices and by whose example, in a critical condition of public affairs, such a desecration of political debate, and such a violation of statesmanlike wisdom and moderation, could be perpetrated. We do not undervalue

the enormous importance of the controversy between the German Government and the Ultramontane forces. All our sympathies and convictions are with the Government; but it is impossible to be assured that the astute Court of Rome has really met its match in the hot-brained Minister who is so easily transported beyond the bounds of decency and discretion.

The extraordinary outburst, moreover, could not very well have been worse-timed; it would almost seem that the Chancellor fell into a trap laid for him by his not very scrupulous opponents, who certainly did all in their power to aggravate the tumult of the scene. For some time past Prince Bismark, notwithstanding that the Catholic Powers of Germany fought bravely for him in the contest with France, and now form no inconsiderable part of his united subjects, has done all in his power to deepen and embitter the feud existing between the Government and the Church. In doing so, and in the attempt to subordinate the Church to the State, and to compel the Roman Catholic subjects of the Empire to be Germans first and Catholics after, he has sought to recast the whole relation of the Church to the State, and to enforce his policy by persecution, and imprisonment, and expulsion, and the rest of the coarse machinery which Englishmen have long since ceased to use, or at least to approve of, in combating any ecclesiastical or so-called spiritual influences. If the contest does not end in a drawn game between the parties—as it probably will, considering that the combatants fight with totally different weapons, and that their controversy has no common ground upon which compromise is possible—at least the ulterior result will be to perpetuate animosities, and render no other union possible than that

between a conqueror and a thoroughly prostrate foe. Already the menace is heard, that it is of no use raising or maintaining Bavarian regiments, for in any future war they will assuredly desert to the enemy. With internal strife of this portentous character on his hands, resulting from a policy of confronting the Ultramontane influences in the Empire by sudden but permanent legislation violently carried into effect, and by determined attempts to compel subjection, the Chancellor allows himself to be betrayed into an outburst of indecorum and temper, which challenges Europe to attribute his almost desperate policy to any causes rather than a far-seeing and comprehensive political conception.

Accordingly, the next day Prince Bismark, anxious, no doubt, to obliterate the effects of his singular indiscretion, went down to the House, and in a less stormy sitting, under cover of explaining his resolution to cancel the post of envoy to the Vatican, made disclosures intended and calculated to restore that public confidence in his policy which would otherwise have been rudely shaken. He charged upon the Pope, that as a true member of the Church militant he had thought fit to revive the ancient struggle of the Papacy with the temporal power, and more especially with the German Empire. He had a secret to disclose: that in 1869, when the Würtemberg Government complained of the action of the Papacy, the Papal Nuncio had retorted that the Roman Church was free only in America, and perhaps England and Belgium, and that in all other countries it had to look to revolution as the sole means of securing her rightful position. This statement was confirmed by Herr von Varnbüler, the Würtemberg Premier of 1869. Instead, however, of a revolution be-

falling Germany, the war of 1870 was inflicted upon them instead. "Gentlemen," he continued, "I am in possession of conclusive evidence proving that the war of 1870 was the combined work of Rome and France; that the Œcumenical Council was cut short on account of the war; and that very different votes would have been taken by the Council had the French been victorious. I know from the very best sources that the Emperor Napoleon was dragged into the war very much against his will by the Jesuitical influences rampant at his Court; that he strove hard to resist these influences; that in the eleventh hour he determined to maintain peace; that he stuck to this determination for half an hour, and that he was ultimately overpowered by persons representing Rome." It is evident from this that the German Government believes that it has good grounds for imputing to the Papacy and its agents an unflagging and implacable hostility to the interests of the Empire, and for believing that the strife between them is no transitory or temporary outburst. But it goes no way at all for the purpose of proving that Prince Bismark is conducting this momentous struggle—which involves principles which are of importance to all, and in which English sympathies are sure to be on his side—with temper, wisdom, and discretion, and with an eye to the permanence of the Empire which he is seeking to consolidate. It is a struggle in which he cannot have a Moltke on his right hand; nor is it one which in the long run can be determined by sheer brute-force. It is one in which moral influence, free discussion, and, above all, time itself, might have been appealed to with confidence in the result. Some accounts say that the people stand passively by while the Government

fights out with the priests the question of superior authority with pertinacity and unflinching resolution. The Duke of Norfolk and the Catholic Union of this country stand sponsors for this version of the outcome of the strife. Five bishops have been thrown into prison; fines have been imposed upon all the bishops in Prussia, except the Bishop of Osnabruck. Eight more have suffered from domiciliary visits from the police, or from the officers who sold their furniture. Since the beginning of the Falk laws, up to the 3d of December, 1400 priests have either been fined or sent to prison on account of those laws; some have been driven from their countries; some for returning without leave have been banished to the Isle of Rugen. It is also stated that, while some of them have been treated in prison as merely political offenders, others have been kept in the same room with criminals, and treated in the same manner. It is further stated that 784 persons have been ordered by Prince Bismark to be summoned before the judge for having offended him in Catholic newspapers. That the policy of the Court of Rome, and the whole spirit and conduct of the Ultramontane party, justify the policy and object of the Falk laws, and called for a patient and determined effort on the part of the Government to make the supremacy of the civil power felt in the State, we do not for one moment doubt. But that such a mode of carrying out that policy, and executing such laws, is wise, or calculated in the end to ensure permanent success, we take leave to doubt. The struggle, momentous as it is, after all, is a stake one; and the way in which civil and spiritual functions have been mixed up together in this legislation, and the blows which have been struck at religion, which were

only aimed at arrogant ecclesiastics, show that the world does not outgrow the blunders of statesmen any more than the controversies of the past. Government cannot always be carried on at the point of the bayonet; and there have been several signs that Prince Bismark's majority is unsteady in its allegiance; while it cannot be doubted that a reaction of sympathy with the dangerous opponents to social order and imperial power, is imminent, and ought never to have been provoked.

It may well be a matter of pride and satisfaction to Englishmen that the meeting of our own Parliament will not open the gates of any controversy at all to be compared with that which distracts the new Empire of Germany. The affairs of the still greater empire which obeys the sceptre of Queen Victoria are in that calm and prosperous condition, always excepting the turmoil and confusion which disorganise the Opposition deprived of its leader, that the Cabinet is able to postpone its meetings till within a fortnight of the commencement of the Session. In an old-established State, with its well-ordered machinery of government, it would be impossible for the public to be enlivened by a scandal of so grave a nature as that involved in the trial of Count Arnim. The rivalries of English statesmen are fought out in an open arena; and the spectacle of a Prime Minister and Ambassador competing for the favour of their sovereign in important diplomatic despatches and reports, and carrying on an acrimonious warfare under cover of official correspondence upon the delicate subject of international relations, is happily to us inconceivable. Moreover, if we are not entirely freed from ecclesiastical contentions, they are mildness itself compared to Prince Bismark's Ultramontane war. The contest in this country has not

fallen into the hands of the Administration, nor does there seem any prospect of collision between Ministers and the Roman Catholic authorities. The fight is waged between Mr Gladstone and his quondam supporters. According to Mr Gladstone, it was the paramount duty of the British Legislature, whatever Rome might say or do, to give to Ireland all that justice could demand, in regard to matters of conscience and civil equality. When Parliament had passed the Church Act of 1869 and the Land Act of 1870, there remained only, he adds, under the great head of Imperial equity, one serious question to be dealt with — that of the higher Education. In respect thereof, the Liberal Government and the Liberal party formally tendered payment in full by the Irish University Bill of 1873. That tender was refused, and that measure was rejected by the Roman Catholic pre-lacy. "From that time forward I have felt that the situation was changed, and that important matters would have to be cleared by suitable explanations. The debt to Ireland had been paid: a debt to the country at large had still to be disposed of; and this has come to be the duty of the hour." We may presume, therefore, that the standing grievances of Ireland are at length disposed of, and that justice to that country is satisfied, and will not again be emblazoned on the banners of the Liberal party, otherwise Mr Gladstone will be in amongst them, scattering havoc and dismay in their ranks. The spirit of strife which the Ultramontane influence arouses in every civil society, may usefully and beneficially in this country evaporate in mutual recrimination and mutual explanations between the ex-Liberal leader and his exasperated and discarded allies. As regards the Romanising faction in the Church

of England, the sacerdotal simoom which rages in Germany is answered by a comparatively feeble whisper in these islands ; and the ecclesiastical legislation abroad has no more exciting counterpart here than the Public Worship Regulation Act of last Session. We have no doubt that that Act will be worked with discretion as well as firmness ; and if any supplemental legislation be found necessary, that it will be resorted to in no spirit of domination, but like the Act of last year, with the unanimous consent of Parliament and the country. If that Act required any vindication, it could be found in the singular correspondence which has recently been published in the London 'Times,' in which the Roman Catholics, by the mouth of Monsignore Capel, charge the Ritualistic party in the English Church, on excellent evidence, that they are "unintentionally, but not less assuredly, disseminating several of the doctrines of the Roman Church ;" and in which Canon Liddon, the accomplished dignitary of our great Protestant Cathedral, though considering it a "gross insult" to have his name coupled with them, replies on behalf and in excuse of the Ritualists, that in adducing this evidence the Monsignore "will have done a good service if he leads any of our brethren to abandon language or practices unauthorised by the Church of England, and tending to bring about a result that we must all unfeignedly deplore, however desirable he may think it." And then the Canon adds in reference to the evidence adduced by the Monsignore in rebuke of these Protestant plagiarisms of a Roman ritual and worship—"He has succeeded, as I cannot but think, in putting his finger upon some expressions which I would respectfully ask the writers and editors of devotional books to reconsider in the

light of the public formularies of the Church of England." Now this is all that the supporters of the Public Worship Regulation Bill have ever said. Only, instead of trusting to a Roman Catholic Monsignore to do "good service" to our clerical brethren, and restrain them from language and practices which amount to superstitious interpretations of Christian doctrine, we have preferred, without creating a single new ecclesiastical offence, simply to render the old law more cheaply and expeditiously administered. So far from there being anything in the nature of persecution about the remedy proposed,—so far from the archbishops being really amenable to all the abuse which was poured upon them,—we have now the admission of Canon Liddon himself—and a most valuable admission it is—that some such restraint was necessary, only that he would apparently have preferred that a Roman Catholic Monsignore, instead of an English tribunal, should differentiate a Protestant clergyman from a sham Roman Catholic priest. It was the practices of those who, we are now told, are indiscreet and uninstructed writers, and their ignorant adherents, which Mr Gladstone would do nothing to restrain, and in virtual and indirect support of which he moved his six famous resolutions, and wrote his celebrated article. Fortunately the common-sense of Englishmen seems likely to prevail ; and the Public Worship Regulation Act, so far from creating any schism or insuperable difficulties, will now be worked with the sympathy and approval of Canon Liddon himself. Mr Disraeli is entitled to the undivided credit of having carried this measure and secured to it unanimous support ; but in his most sanguine moments even his sagacity could hardly have foreseen that his determination "to put down ritualism"

would be effected with the sanction of such high approval.

We observed this sinister rumour published on authority the other day—"That the small committee at Birmingham, who have been so mischievously astir in other fields, are bent on advising a Disestablishment Campaign; but it is thought that they will be open to reason, and will be overruled for their own good." This, coupled with a previous rumour that Mr Bright had been informed—doubtless in the interests of an ambitious and intriguing gentleman—that Birmingham would no longer consent to be partially disfranchised, and taken in connection with various articles and speeches with which the public have been recently favoured, looks like a desperate hoisting of the black flag. If the State once lets go its connection with and control over religion,—if it lays down the preposterous principle that it has nothing to do with the subject,—it will eventually find that it has left outside itself a power greater than any which it possesses within, and may have to confront an enemy which has proved strong enough to baffle Prince Bismark, and may yet rend in twain the colossal strength of the new German Empire. We have solved the greatest problem of modern times, or rather inherit its solution; and whether or not it be true that the Roman Catholic Church is the inevitable residuary legatee of Anglican disestablishment, these are not the times in which England can afford to part with its ecclesiastical settlement and State control of the national Church.

The most prominent feature about the opening of our own Parliament is the general unanimity of political sentiment which pervades the country, and which seems to render the contentions which marked the good old times absolutely im-

possible. Not merely do the lion and the lamb lie down together in unsuspecting confidence, but it seems difficult for any but the most practised observers to say which is the lamb and which is the lion. According to Sir William Harcourt, "the Liberal party, vanquished at the hustings, had led captive the fierce Conservative reaction, and infused even Liberal ideas into the hearts of the country gentlemen." In other words, the ideas of "the country gentlemen," without inquiring into their origin, obtain the inexpressible advantage of his august approval; he speaks, as we understand, on behalf of the old Whig and moderate Liberal school, which refuses to submit to Radical dictation. He has not words enough to express his contempt for that class of politicians whose aim is to manufacture new opinions and new views, for the sole purpose of differentiating themselves from the Conservatives, who admittedly monopolise all the sense and intelligence of the situation. "The frozen-out fox-hunters swearing for a thaw" are recommended to support the Ministerial policy, and content themselves with entertaining "a pleasant confidence in the vicissitudes of the political atmosphere." It is a miserable spectacle which the Liberal party is in peril of presenting, and from which Sir W. Harcourt, Mr Goschen, and all their most respected and respectable leaders, would save them—viz., of undue despondency on the one side, and adopting in panic an extreme policy on the other. He denounces the prolonged continuance of that "earnest treatment," with which we are all familiar, and which consists, he says, "in cramming down the throats of mankind all sorts of stuff, without the least consideration of the capacity of the people to assimilate or

digest it." And it is really refreshing to listen to this view propounded by a distinguished Liberal, for it only shows how, under Conservative ascendancy, common-sense may triumph in minds which have not always recognised its sway. "The priests and the philosophers had between them kept natures of the shuttlecock order in an everlasting see-saw between superstition and unbelief. Shocked by the dreary vacuity of the one, weak minds had taken refuge in the degrading stimulants of the other." Why, the Radical philosophers and the Irish priests have been the backbone of the Liberal strength for years. The outspoken denunciation of both the one and the other, on high Liberal authority, is indeed a sign that times are changed: the "ideas" are sound, and they are in the ascendant; but it is only recent events which have infused them into the Liberal mind. It seems that all the elements of confusion in this country are at rest, or exist only within the ranks of the divided, distracted, and deserted party of Opposition.

France, on the other hand, finds her affairs in radical disorder. While the Count de Chambord, the Prince Imperial, and M. Gambetta divide between them the allegiance of Frenchmen, there is an Assembly and a President which between them divide sovereign power, and hold it by a most precarious tenure. The Assembly at any moment may be dissolved, Marshal M'Mahon may at any moment die. Meanwhile they cannot agree even to discuss the constitutional laws, or to provide for the transmission of power. The Assembly is incapacitated for action by its divisions; the Marshal by himself is a mere fragment of a constitution, which it is impossible to form. All parties concur in the prolonged

anarchy, for every one of them shrinks from the decisive encounter involved in an appeal to the country.

The National Assembly met on the 3d of December. The Marshal-President has repeatedly pledged himself that, for the next six years, he will carry on the Executive. He appealed, at the opening of his Parliament, to all sections which it contains to help him in conducting public affairs during the interregnum, or, as it may be called, during his six years' temporary sovereignty. The attitude towards him in return is embarrassing to the last degree; for though all parties agree in supporting the Septennate, yet the agreement merely means that parties are at a deadlock.

Meanwhile the Marshal considers that he only accepted power on the condition—formally stipulated by him, and formally agreed to by the Assembly—that constitutional laws, voted within a short interval, would give his power the strength, authority, and means of action which he declared necessary. His chief demand is for the establishment of a Senate in order to arbitrate between two independent and sovereign powers—his own and that of the Assembly—in case any conflict should arise. The demand itself has given occasion for that conflict. The Marshal sent down a message demanding that the Assembly should at once decide upon the question of a Second Chamber, as an institution equally necessary to the Government of France, whether or not the Marshal were armed with the power of dissolution. On the subject of the transmission of power—which, of course, was like throwing a torch into a powder-magazine—he confined himself to saying that it should be settled that, when his term of office expired, the Assembly then in existence should have "the full

and entire liberty of defining the form of Government." In other words, till 1880, the truce between all parties should be renewed, as a means of securing the co-operation of all moderate parties in the work of national reformation. Not merely is the country powerless to decide upon its form of Government at present; all that the most sanguine politicians can hope for is to secure a machinery of administration which will work until France can make up her mind. Even that hope is baffled. The Marshal is the chief of the executive, with some portion of the sovereign power delegated to him—tied, as it were, to the stake, responsible for the administration. The actual sovereign of France is the Assembly, which is so distracted by party divisions that it has no will of its own, except to negative every proposal which may be made. It is *de jure* capable of dismissing the Marshal and removing the Government; but it is *de facto* quite incapable of any vigorous action. On the other hand, the Marshal cannot dissolve it without a *coup d'état*. The Government must go on living from hand to mouth; the moment it takes thought for the future, even to prevent the clashing of those rival powers during the continuance of this provisional arrangement, and still more when it seeks to look beyond it, one crisis after another occurs, and the scene is one of the direst confusion. In the present instance, the proposal was defeated by a majority of 420 against 250. The result shows that the Marshal must be content with being a stop-gap—the impersonation of French indecision, of that paralysis which has fallen upon French political action, which renders it impossible to reconstitute the State. His only other alternative, unless he resigns, is a violent dissolution,

which is a remedy worse than the disease which he wishes to cure. As long as he is content with remaining what is called the fragment of a constitution, he may reckon on the support of nearly all parties. The Legitimists and extreme Republicans alone are hostile to him. The moment he seeks to frame a constitution, and proposes the concurrence of the Assembly, he is at once confronted by an overwhelming coalition. This unsatisfactory position, as it must be to him, can only be terminated (unless he resigns) by a dissolution; and no single party in the State would welcome that expedient. The Imperialists prefer delay on account of the extreme youth of the Prince Imperial; the Orleanists are encumbered by the Count de Paris's understanding with the Count de Chambord; the Republicans have nothing to gain by precipitation, and are anxious to cancel the memory of past excesses by present moderation, before they appeal to a final verdict. Even the Legitimists may perhaps consider that the longer this deadlock lasts, the greater the chance of the White Flag being at last considered the indispensable condition of the final restoration of order.

What the future may have in store for the French in regard to their form of government, no human sagacity can foresee. What is wanted is the power of the individual—some man of capacity and will, who can arrest the confidence of the people. Meanwhile, in forecasting events, it is as important to attend to the *personnel* in France as it is amongst ourselves. Here is Count Arnim's testimony in one of the private despatches to the Emperor of Germany, for a knowledge of which we are indebted to the disclosures made at his recent trial:—
"France is at this moment (April

11, 1874) being governed by persons whose political education began under Louis Philippe; they were subsequently condemned to a twenty years' inactivity, and many of them like, if not absolutely as, *émigrés*. By a reversal of the wheel of fortune, they are now placed at the head of the party whose junior adherents they were when Louis Philippe fell. With these persons, who have learned but little in their forced retirement, there are united others whose political reminiscences belong to the period before 1830, when their fathers were among the *classes dirigeantes*. They are all very respectable, but, with the exception of the Duc Decazes, very unfit for the cares of government. Most of them are men between fifty-five and sixty-five, and, from their political inexperience and increasing years, will after a little while cease to play their part should the Empire be restored under Napoleon Quatre. The more aged servants of the late Emperor will hardly be young and active enough to support the renovated throne. Rouher, Fleury, Gramont, and others, though they may lay claim to lucrative posts, will no longer be fit to render effective service. Between the aged servants of Napoleon III. and the younger adherents of his son there is a wide gap, as the men between forty-five and fifty-five mostly belong to another party. Accordingly, the Empire too will be obliged to rely upon younger men. It is the same thing with the Republic: if Gambetta assumes the reins of government, he will have to surround himself chiefly with young men. However venturesome it will be to prophesy, it is still pretty certain that less than ten years hence few of those now influential will be alive or politically active."

The provisional Government, therefore, will tend to clear the politics of France of all the weeds and baneful associations which have grown up round the memories of those forms of government which were successively closed by the Revolutions of 1830, 1848, and 1870. If, when that time arrives, the white flag still casts a deadly shadow over Bourbon and Orleanist alike, there will remain, according to present appearances, the rival pretensions of the Prince Imperial and M. Gambetta. The former will have an advantage which his father in exile never possessed—namely, that he represents an established and recognised dynasty. He may dissociate himself from the crimes and errors of the Second Empire, and the men of that Empire will have mostly passed away. And as the representative of constitutional monarchy, he will represent a system which, with all its faults, secured to France internal order and external influence; while its corruption and shortcomings may well be deemed the accidents of the system. The latter has a purely personal position, and he is weighted with great responsibility in regard to the past. A revolution in the presence of hostile armies, and the continuance of war long after the disappearance of the regular army, involved his country in disasters which will never be forgiven. And the Third Republic has only increased the horrors which fill the associations connected with that form of government in France. A new Empire need not necessarily be surrounded by all the injurious influences which were at work in Louis Napoleon's Court; and, above all, it would be an act of miserable folly to revive those Jesuitical influences to which not Prince Bismark alone attri-

butes the war of 1870 and the fall of Napoleon.

This scene of political confusion and impending anarchy has never been equalled in England since the Revolution of 1688, and contrasts most forcibly with the established order which now prevails amongst us, and the utter impotence of any of the disturbing elements which possibly exist. The English political mind was employed for nearly twenty years upon a trifling question of a pound or two more or less in regard to lowering the then franchise. Even the questions which now distract and divide the unfortunate Liberal party, are mere questions of detail compared with the fundamental differences which separate factions in France. And as regards the immediate future, the most interesting topic is that same question of *personnel* upon which Count Arnim lays so much stress in Paris. The severe illness of Mr Disraeli reminds the country of the fact, which his vivacity and intellectual freshness have concealed, and which they would willingly have forgotten, that he is in his seventieth year. Mr Gladstone, at sixty-five, declares that "retirement is dictated to him by his personal views as to the best method of spending the closing years of his life." The long and ardent rivalry between these two celebrated men, who have sustained the conflict on either side

"with a dashing sea
Of eloquence between,"

draws to its close. The one has withdrawn from the scene, which he will occasionally revisit as a private member; the other remains at his post, a veteran leader, the last of the great Parliamentary chiefs of Queen Victoria's reign, who has experienced every variety of political fortune, and has proved to be equally ready to wage a hopeless

struggle with gallantry and dauntless spirit, and to sustain a triumph with dignity and moderation. Whatever may be the verdict of history upon the comparative merits and achievements of their respective careers, there cannot be a second opinion as to which of the two is the greater leader of men, and deserves best at the hands of his party.

Mr Gladstone's eloquence and personal achievements have made him one of the most famous men of this century; but it will not enhance his reputation if he abandons himself to that vanity of literature in high places which besets, one after the other, our foremost public men. The determining cause of his retirement must be some more urgent reason than the wish for rest and quiet. In the last year or two of his leadership of Opposition, Mr Disraeli lived, as he himself said, in seclusion, and only appeared in public at intervals, in obedience to paramount public duty. It is no very great tax upon an experienced political chief to retain in his hands the ultimate control of Opposition tactics and leave the lieutenants to fight the campaign. It is very seldom in political warfare that a chief occupies the exceptional position which enables him, on the one hand, to withdraw from active service and perpetual presence in the field; and, on the other, to retain the allegiance of his party, over whom he can resume his power at will. If any one compares the incessant activity of Mr Disraeli in conducting the opposition to Lord Aberdeen's Government twenty years ago, with his attitude in the later years of Mr Gladstone's Government, he will find an example of the manner in which an Opposition leader of established authority and declining years may usefully serve his party,

which, while he belongs to it, he must, by force of greater genius and experience, either intentionally lead or unconsciously baffle and weaken. Mr Gladstone's name alone was a tower of strength to his party, present or potential, so long as he would allow them to conjure with it; and as he not merely withdraws that strength, but inflicts upon them the demoralising uncertainty that, at any moment, however critical, it may be turned against them, it is impossible to overestimate the disaster which has befallen them. It is hard to reorganise your army in the presence of a triumphant enemy; but the confusion is infinitely increased if an indispensable battalion withdraws from the van and fights for its own hand at the moment of serious encounter.

The total disorganisation of her Majesty's Opposition is a matter of so much public importance, that although ordinarily the relations of a party to its leader are not a legitimate subject of discussion and interference by their opponents, still the irreconcilable personal difference between Mr Gladstone and the House of Commons Liberals, for such we take it to be, has been so forced upon the public attention as to render comment inevitable. "*On doit laver son linge sale en famille*" is, we conceive, by far the most prudent maxim for politicians to follow in the unfortunate circumstances which have befallen the Liberal party. But both in 1867, when his followers deserted him at a critical moment in the Reform campaign, also in the far more serious defection at the dissolution of 1874, the first thing that occurs to Mr Gladstone is to chuck up the reins. The mere notion of such a man resigning the leadership, and at the same time remaining in Parliament a

member of the party, is absurd on the face of it. Who is there in the ranks capable of leading him? Who is there capable of carrying the strength of the party along a track or in pursuit of a policy which he forbids? In office, a titular chief may reign; but in Opposition, men follow the leader who will show them game. The new ruler of the Liberal party, whoever he may be, unless he develops unexpected qualities, must either obey Mr Gladstone's will, or be prepared to quell his insubordination and defeat his resistance. In other words, he must prove himself the stronger man. Until he does so he is merely interim leader: Mr Gladstone will be able to resume his authority whenever he chooses to appear. A man cannot resign his proved superiority in council and in action; and if Mr Gladstone wished to withdraw from active service, and still to retain his seat in Parliament, the best way to do it would have been to have said nothing about it, have appointed his lieutenant, and retained his own freedom of action unhampered by a public announcement of an impossible resignation. The only mode by which his present determination can be carried into effect, and the Opposition regain that solidarity which is important for the transaction of public business, would be to accept a peerage. Otherwise the new leader must be either Mr Gladstone's *locum tenens* or his successful rival. An abdication may be justifiable, and the reasons assigned in this case are sufficient, but it should be completed. If you retain your supremacy, which in this case is personal and not official, you must perform or delegate the duties which are incident to it: discipline cannot be established whilst a *major* may at any moment sever the bonds of allegiance.

The position is utterly unprecedented in political warfare. Sir R. Peel and Lord John Russell were both dislodged from the leadership of their party; but in each case the whole party of its own free will transferred its allegiance to another chief, competent to hold the ground as his own. In the present instance, all through the recess, especially since his pamphlet on the Vatican decrees, every Liberal meeting in England has rung with cheers for Mr Gladstone. His supremacy in the party is unquestioned; and it remains to be seen whether he can put it from him, as a discarded cloak, and at the same time remain a member of that party.

The truth is, that with all his great qualities and transcendent powers, Mr Gladstone has, throughout his life, been the spoiled child of political fortune. He never, till the eve of his leadership, had had to struggle to undergo "the stern discipline that chastens human vanity," and to learn the virtue of patience and the fortitude of self-control from standing on his own resources. As the nominee of the Duke of Newcastle, and the favourite pupil of Sir R. Peel for fifteen years, he was, with all his brilliant powers, nursed and coddled into statesmanship; as the gifted son of Oxford University, he found for another eighteen years a safe refuge from a popular constituency; and the first time he won a contested election against all comers was three months before Lord Palmerston's death. During those eighteen years his great financial battles were fought and triumphs won under the protecting ægis, first of Lord John Russell, and then of Lord Palmerston; and those who remember the campaigns of 1860 and 1861 will recall how his imperious temper and impatient

resolves were overruled for his own good by more experienced wisdom and more disciplined judgment. When at last he was brought face to face with his still greater rival, bereft of his protectors, each on his own resources, in four months he was ousted from power. During that time he never once got the large majority which he had inherited from Lord Palmerston into hand; the whole country was talking of his faults of temper and blunders in management; and in despair he resorted to resignation in order to teach his party obedience. Mr Disraeli, dealing with a House which was returned on no definite issue, and emphatically called for guidance, won his legislative triumphs in the matter of Parliamentary Reform by sheer superiority over his rival in the management of men and the leadership of party. Until last year he has never had a majority; but he carried his measures over his rival's head, and with all the odds against him won the Premiership first. A temper which alternates between imperious dictation and brooding despondency, was ill fitted to conduct with success a Parliamentary campaign against a leader who was always master of himself, and always equal to the occasion. Accordingly, the Liberal candidate for power, beaten at all points, staked everything on one desperate throw and won; but it is a game which cannot be repeated. The country gave him a splendid majority, and Mr Gladstone used his power with the constituencies to rule his followers with a rod of iron. As his influence with the country waned, the true relations between leader and followers again became apparent. On the one side was a lofty, an almost Vatican, claim to absolute submission, and lately an implacable

resentment against desertion and defeat; on the other, the real attitude of mind was disclosed in the fulsome flattery, cajolery, denunciation, and sarcasm which have been alternately expended upon him in Parliament and in public. The relationship between them has never approached to that spirit, on the part of the followers, of deference and loyalty which Lord Russell and Lord Palmerston, on different grounds, uniformly commanded. Under these circumstances, there is no correlative cordiality in the mind of the leader, and he accordingly sees no public advantage in undertaking a task for which none of his antecedents fit him in point of acquired temper or natural sympathies—viz., that of a patient reconstruction of the party fortunes. A man who has squandered two large majorities in less than ten years, and exhausted an overpowering enthusiasm in his favour, has become unfitted, especially in his declining years, for the task of leading a forlorn-hope, and renovating the spirit and confidence of his defeated followers. The Liberals have no right to expect that he should devote himself heart and soul to this task; but it is an aggravation of their difficulties and disasters that by his presence he should render the task impossible to others.

And if the leader, with all his unrivalled genius, has twice fought a winning game with imperiousness and failed, and now recoils from the irksome task of fighting a losing game with patience and something of that majestic self-control which he has never learnt, what are we to say to the followers, now reduced to a condition so justly entitled to the indulgence of compassion? We say that they richly deserve their fate; and we trust that the severe lesson

which they have received will teach them more moderation and respect for others than they have learnt in the heyday of prosperity.

The divisions which they have established and encouraged in their ranks have not merely ruined their strength, but have placed them before the world in a position of absurdity and ridicule. In five years the party passed from an attitude of mere servile obedience to Mr Gladstone's dictation to one of tumultuous competition for the honour of denouncing his policy, dictating his future course, or of preparing to supersede him. Any member of the party anxious for distinction found a short cut to notoriety by starting some impossible crotchet, and threatening defection and irreconcilable hostility if it were not forthwith inscribed on the Liberal banner. Even provincial mayors, with no moral or intellectual authority, were heard loudly demanding that a great crisis should be immediately produced in the interests of the party, and as a modest opening for themselves; and that if the great leader, who was a statesman before they were born, was not at once prepared to advance, he must get out of the road and make way for younger and more active men. The total anarchy which prevailed was brought to their notice long before the dissolution. Their friends implored them to learn moderation and wisdom; their opponents, ourselves included, protested against the affairs of the country remaining in the hands of a divided, discredited, and obsolete faction. In their adversity they have as yet learned nothing. The children of Israel murmuring in the desert would be as promising a subject for political guidance. Every man amongst them, however little known to fame, or sustained by the pos-
 session

sion of political ability, considers himself entitled to deplore Mr Gladstone's shortcomings or his ecclesiastical proclivities, and to flaunt "Liberal principles" in his face—that convenient and elastic expression which was always the favourite platform from which to assail the Minister, just as any ritualistic priest will flourish "the Church" in the face of his Bishop. Unfortunately a Liberal Party Regulation Bill was out of the question; and accordingly, the strained relations between leader and followers have burst asunder, and their former chief deserts them at the commencement of a campaign, and does not even condescend to the ceremony of transferring his mantle to a successor.

The result is, that for a time the Liberal party has ceased to exist. The time has not yet arrived for reviewing its career with the im-

partiality of the future. It has produced or attracted to its ranks many great men; and it has a long catalogue of achievements and failures to arrest the attention of history. But its collapse has been signal and complete. We stand now at the commencement of a new epoch in history. New, or rather very old questions are coming to the front; and what is known as Liberalism has now ceased to cast its spell over the intellect and sympathies of the age. Fortunately this crisis in the fate of our opponents has found the Tory party renovated, united and strong; and, thanks to the guidance through so many years of doubt and despair by its two great leaders, the late Lord Derby and Mr Disraeli, it is now established as the party of the future to which England gladly intrusts its fortunes and looks for the guidance of its destinies.

